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Cheery Comedies for Christmas

A Collection of Plays, Pantomimes, Tableaux, Readings, Recitations, Illustrated Poems, etc., Suitable for Use at Christmas

By
Edith M. Burrows, Gertrude M. Henderson
and others

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
1915

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Cheery Comedies for Christmas

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THE AWAKENING OF CHRISTMAS. *Twenty-three boys and thirty-two girls.*

A CHRISTMAS STRIKE. *Four boys and three girls.*

SANTA'S SURPRISE. *Thirty-three children (a smaller number will answer) and a man to impersonate Santa Claus.*

THE SYNDICATED SANTA CLAUS. *Three males, two females (adults), who speak, and any number of children.*

KRISS KRINGLE'S PANORAMA. *Consisting of tableau, recitations, etc.*

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OCT -2 1915

The Awakening of Christmas

An Operetta for Children

Edith M. Burrows

The Awakening of Christmas

Far away in the Heart of the World, the Spirit of Christmas is sleeping, destined to be awakened by the Christmas Feelings which make their way into the Heart of the World. Evening Star, Wind-in-the-Pine-Trees, Moonshine, Snowflakes and Sleighbells suggest the season and begin the awakening. Breath-of-Balsam, Holly, Mistletoe, Yule-Log Sprites and Candles bring their gifts of fragrance, color, warmth and light, while Christmas Trees, Stockings, Kind-Thought-Gifts, Children, Dreams and Carols complete the awakening of the Spirit of Christmas. Then the Heart of the World becomes the scene of joyous celebrations.

SCENE.—The Heart of the World.
TIME.—Once every year.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EVENING STAR.
WIND-IN-THE-PINE-TREES.
MOONSHINE.
SNOWFLAKES.
SLEIGHBELLS.
BREATH-OF-BALSAM.
HOLLY.
MISTLETOE.
YULE-LOG SPRITES.
CANDLES.
CHRISTMAS TREES.
STOCKINGS.
KIND-THOUGHT-GIFTS.
CHILDREN.
DREAMS.
CAROLS.
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

COSTUMES

EVENING STAR wears a straight, long robe of amethyst color, veiled with filmy gray, and a light chiffon scarf of the palest yellow to suggest the dying sunset colors. On her head is a narrow gold crown with a large gold star in the center.

WIND-IN-THE-PINE-TREES wears a long robe of grayish-brown, suggestive of tree-trunks and a scarf of soft, deep green which is draped over her outstretched arms.

MOONSHINE wears a long robe of dark gray-blue, partially concealed by silver-spangled scarfs which hang down from her shoulders.

SNOWFLAKES. Six small girls should be chosen for this part, and they wear very short, straight Greek dresses, hanging from the shoulders and leaving their arms bare. The dresses are white and perfectly plain.

SLEIGHBELLS. Six small boys wear elf suits of gray and small round caps of gray trimmed around the edges with small bells. They carry sleighbells which they ring in their song.

BREATH-OF-BALSAM wears a long, straight robe of dark green and carries an armful of fragrant balsam boughs. A fair-haired girl should be chosen for this part.

HOLLY AND MISTLETOE wear straight white Greek gowns, sleeveless and trimmed with sprays of holly and mistletoe respectively. They both carry large bunches of the plant they represent.

YULE-LOG SPRITES. Four or six rather small boys who wear elf suits of wood-brown and tall pointed caps of red and yellow to represent flames. They carry, swung by ropes over their shoulders, a huge Yule-log on which they later sit.

CANDLES. Six tiny girls who wear straight, long white dresses and flame-caps of red and yellow.

CHRISTMAS TREES. Two girls of medium size who wear the same kind of costume as that worn by Breath-of-Balsam. They also carry evergreen branches, but their evergreens are decorated with tinsel and Christmas-Tree ornaments.

STOCKINGS. Two boys of medium size, wearing costumes of black muslin cut in the shape of stockings and stuffed out in bumpy and knobby shapes, with openings at the top for the boys' heads and in the bottom for their feet so that they may walk.

KIND-THOUGHT-GIFTS. Four children, two girls and two boys, may represent these gifts. Their bodies are wrapped up in white tissue paper, leaving their legs and arms free, to represent Christmas packages, and they are tied with red ribbon bows and decorated with sprays of holly to give the desired festive effect. One of the children may actually be enclosed in a box, tied with red ribbons and decorated with holly.

CHILDREN. Four small children of varying sizes with night-gowns or pajamas on, and carrying lighted candles, dolls, teddy-bears, etc., make a typical Christmas-eve suggestion.

DREAMS. Six little girls, especially graceful dancers, wear Greek costumes of filmy gray with veils of gray even over their heads and arms so that they are never clearly or sharply seen.

CAROLS. Six children, boys and girls, with especially good voices; the girls wear white Greek costumes (short), and the boys, white page suits. All the costumes are decorated with black notes of music, musical symbols, etc.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS wears a perfectly plain, long robe of white, built on Greek lines; from her shoulders hangs a long mantle with a court train which also is white and edged with white cotton, thickly sprinkled with sparkling Christmas powder so that it gives a radiant appearance to her costume. If something more elaborate is desired, swansdown may be substituted for the cotton trimming. On her head is a plain, narrow crown of silver tinsel, and she carries a sceptre of silver, wound with silver tinsel and tipped with a silver tinsel Christmas star.

NOTE REGARDING COSTUMES

All of the girls' costumes in the play may be made very simply and inexpensively of wide cheese-cloth, in one piece, with a hole cut for the head. This garment, worn over an underslip of cheese-cloth, is really most graceful. Lovely and inexpensive color effects may be obtained by dyeing the cloth used to the soft colors desired; beautiful shaded effects may thus be obtained and it is not necessary to boil the dye.

NOTE REGARDING CHARACTERS

The parts of Evening Star, Wind-in-the-Pine-Trees, Moonshine, Breath-of-Balsam and Spirit of Christmas ought to be taken by older girls and the other parts may be taken by children as indicated.

NOTE REGARDING MUSIC

The music called for by this operetta is all familiar, and if not to be found in the house or memory should easily be supplied by the nearest music dealer. If it cannot be thus found, the publishers will be glad to quote prices on application.

The Awakening of Christmas

(*The curtain rises disclosing the Heart of the World, a mysterious, dimly-lighted, cavernous place whose walls are hung with branches of evergreen. Among these evergreens are concealed dozens of tiny electric lamps, such as are used on Christmas trees, which flash out later and make of the cavern a fairy-like bower. At the center back of stage, is a raised platform on which is a divan covered with evergreens. The platform is covered with dark green material so that both it and the divan on it blend with the background and are not easily distinguishable at first. On the divan, supported by many pillows of dark green and braced so that she faces the audience, reclines the sleeping* SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS. *Over her are lightly thrown six concealing veils of white net, so that at first a draped figure only is visible. As the play progresses the veils of net are removed at intervals by the different Christmas Feelings, so that the sleeping* SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS *is fully revealed only just a short time before the awakening. There are entrances to the cavern Heart of the World through evergreen branches—right and left. The floor and platform are thickly strewn with fragrant pine needles.—This stage-setting has been tried out by the author and is known to be practical as well as pleasing.*)

(*Opening Chorus, off stage.*)

THE HEART OF THE WORLD

(*Tune,—"The Dearest Spot On Earth to Me."*)

ALL. Mysterious bowèr that we love,
Heart of the World,
Where we return tho' far we rove,
Heart of the World.
Where there's joy and never weeping,
Where the Christmas Spirit's sleeping,
There our faithful watch we're keeping,
Heart of the World.

(*At the end of this song enter* EVENING STAR *and* WIND-IN-THE-PINE-TREES *from right and left respectively. A faint light enters with* EVENING STAR *who moves very slowly.* WIND-IN-THE-PINE-TREES *keeps her arms swaying as she talks and sings.*)

STAR. Oh, Wind-in-the-Pine-Trees, I greet you!

WIND. And to you, Evening Star, my good-will. Again we are the first of the Christmas Feelings to enter the Heart of the World where yet the Christmas Spirit is asleep.

STAR. Each year 'tis so, but soon the others will join us. Meanwhile, we have our work to do.

EVENING STAR SONG

(*Tune,—"Stars of the Summer Night."*)

STAR. From the bright heavens fair,
I send my beams afar,
And whisper as I gleam:
"I am the Christmas Star,
I am, I am the Christmas Star."

WIND That is a lovely message, oh Evening Star. I, too, am doing my part.

WIND SONG

(*Tune,—"Sweet and Low."*)

WIND (*swaying slowly*).
Gentle, shy, soft and sweet,
Wind-in-the-Pine-Trees blows.
(*Swaying fast.*) Boisterous, high, rough and fleet,
Wind-in-the-Pine-Trees blows.
Blowing the message that Christmas is near,
Blowing the message that Christmas is here,
And they listen, ho,
Yes, they listen so,
As I blow.

Enter MOONSHINE, *right, bringing a little more light with her.*

MOON. My greetings, sisters. I heard you calling and I came.

STAR. Fair Moonshine, you are ever welcome.

WIND. And now that you have come, and brought your light, shall we proceed to do our part toward the awakening of the Christmas Spirit?

OTHERS. Yes, yes.

(*They all approach the sleeping figure and gently remove one veil as they sing the following trio.*)

OH, LOVELY SPIRIT

(*Tune,—"Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes."*)

MOON—STAR—WIND.

Oh, lovely Spirit, canst thou hear
Our voices raised to thee?
When wilt thou wake and gaze on us
That we may happy be?
This old world's heart is lonely now,
But shall no longer be,
No longer empty be or sad,
'Tis waiting but for thee.

(*A full chorus off-stage takes up this song and repeats the last four lines. The three characters on the stage take up their positions at the right of the divan as the sound of sleighbells is heard, and the* SNOWFLAKES *and* SLEIGHBELLS *enter from the left; the* SNOWFLAKES *take the center of the stage first, the* SLEIGHBELLS *lining up in back of them.*)

SNOWFLAKE SONG

(*Tune,—"Sleep, Baby, Sleep."*)

SNOW (*lightly*).

Snowflakes are we,
So light, so gay, so free,
And as upon the earth we fall,
Just listen, and you'll hear us call;—
"Christmas we sing,
Christmas we bring."

(*The ranks of the* SNOWFLAKES *part in the center and the* SLEIGHBELLS *come between them to the front of the stage.*)

SLEIGHBELL SONG

(*Tune,—"Jingle Bells."*)

BELLS (*gaily, jingling bells*).

Ringing as we go,
Showing our delight,
Following the snow
O'er the ground so white.
See we gaily ring,
Glad and loud and clear,
Hear us as we merrily sing,
For Christmas joys are near.
Ring ye bells, sing ye bells,
Ring and sing away,
Oh, how glad we are that soon
Dear Christmas will hold sway.

(*Full chorus repeats the last four lines. A merry little dance takes place in which* SNOWFLAKES *and* SLEIGHBELLS *skip about together to the music of "Jingle Bells" and the ringing of the bells. At the end of this dance, the* SNOWFLAKES *and* SLEIGHBELLS *approach the sleeping* SPIRIT *and remove the second veil. The* SLEIGHBELLS *then take up a position at the right of the divan while the* SNOWFLAKES *range themselves at the left.*)

Enter from the right BREATH-OF-BALSAM.

A SNOWFLAKE (*not seeing her*). I smell a Christmasy smell! What can it be?

A SLEIGHBELL. Breath-of-Balsam with her evergreen fragrance has come.

BALSAM. Yes, another year I have come to meet with you in the Heart of the World and help to rouse the Christmas Spirit.

BREATH-OF-BALSAM SONG

(*Tune,—"Believe me, if all those endearing young charms."*)

BALSAM.

From the evergreen branches a fragrance so sweet
Softly's stealing o'er all the fair earth,
And it whispers in passing a message so fleet;
"'Tis the season of gladness and mirth,

There is peace and good-will in the world's heart to-day,
  There is fellowship for every life,
There is love in abundance, so let us, we pray,
  Cease now from unkindness and strife."

(*At the end of her song she lays a branch of evergreen at the foot of the divan and then stands at left of divan, back of the* SNOWFLAKES. *Enter from the left,* HOLLY *and* MISTLETOE; *they move toward the center of the stage and, facing each other in front of the divan, sing their duet.*)

HOLLY AND MISTLETOE DUET

(*Tune,—"My Bonnie."*)

HOLLY AND MISTLETOE.

We hail thee, fair Spirit of Christmas,
  And ye, Christmas Feelings, we hail.
Our berries are emblems of gladness,
  Of joys may this season ne'er fail!
    Holly, Mistletoe,
See the bright berries we bring, we bring,
    Holly, Mistletoe,
As praises of Christmas we sing!

(*At the close of their song they lay sprays of holly and mistletoe at the foot of the divan and then remove the third veil, finally taking a position at the left of divan, near* BREATH-OF-BALSAM.)

MOON. You have brought Christmas fragrance and color into the Heart of the World, gentle newcomers; it seems a better place since you have come.

STAR. Indeed, yes—but see! Here come the gay Yule-Log Sprites; now we shall have the warmth of their blaze.

Enter from the right the jolly little YULE-LOG SPRITES, *prancing to the music of their song.*

SONG OF THE YULE-LOG SPRITES

(*Tune,—"Rig-a-Jig."*)

SPRITES. Our blaze is bright and fair to see,
  Oh, snap and leap and crackle-o!
We dance and bound and jump with glee,
  Oh, snap and crackle-o!

(*Suiting action to words.*)

Then dance and bound and way up we go!
And up we go, and up we go!
Then dance and bound and way up we go!
Oh, snap and crackle-o!

(*The* YULE-LOG SPRITES *drag their log to the right of divan and sit upon or near the log, while the full chorus repeats the following.*)

CHORUS. Then dance and bound and way up they go!
And up they go, and up they go!
Then dance and bound and way up they go!
Oh, snap and crackle-o!

Enter from the left the CANDLES. *Immediately all the electric lamps, concealed among the evergreens, flash out and the stage is lighted by them during the remainder of the play.*

BALSAM (*as* CANDLES *enter*). Look! the Christmas Candles! Now we shall have light.

CANDLE SONG

(*Tune,—"The Quilting Party."*)

CANDLES. For this happy moment waiting,
We have passed a whole long year,
Now with all our soft light golden gleaming,
We salute thee, Christmas dear.
We salute thee, Christmas dear,
We salute thee, Christmas dear,
Now with all our soft light golden gleaming,
We salute thee, Christmas dear!

MOON. Dear little Christmas Candles, you are welcome always, and your gift of light brings cheer into the Heart of the World.

(*The* CANDLES *remove a fourth veil from the* SPIRIT, *and then take their places left of divan, opposite the* YULE-LOG SPRITES.)

BALSAM. Ah, here come my friends the Christmas Trees at last!

Enter the CHRISTMAS TREES *from the right.*

A TREE. From our home in the forest we have traveled to the cities and towns with our message of Christmas joys, and now we have reached the Heart of the World.

CHRISTMAS TREE SONG

(*Tune,—"Those Evening Bells."*)

TREES. From forest wild, from woodland home,
To serve dear Christmas have we come.
In fragrant robes of evergreen
We wait the candles' glowing sheen,
And raise our voices loud and clear,
In praise, in praise of Christmas dear!

(*The* TREES *move to the right of the divan, and as they do so they spy the* STOCKINGS *who enter from the left.*)

A TREE. Hello, Stockings, now we are happy!

A STOCKING. And so are we to be here again and greet you all.

SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

(*Tune,—"Comin' Thro' the Rye."*)

STOCKINGS (*gaily*).
We are merry Christmas Stockings,
Full of joys are we.
Hear our question, teasing, mocking,
How'ld you like to be
Happy child on Christmas morning,
So that you could see
All our gifts? You'd not be scorning,
Ah, no, you'd laugh with glee!

(*The* STOCKINGS *take their places at the left of divan as the* KIND-THOUGHT-GIFTS *enter from the right.*)

HOLLY. You love to tease, don't you, Stockings? But we shall not have to wait to see your gifts to satisfy our curiosity, for here come the Kind-Thought-Gifts.

A GIFT. Greetings, Christmas Feelings all; we bring the spirit of love and kind thoughts with us to the Heart of the World.

SONG OF THE KIND-THOUGHT-GIFTS

(*Tune,—"The Miller of the Dee."*)

GIFTS. We are the Kind-Thought-Christmas-Gifts,
We're made with loving care,
We're woven through with kindest thoughts,
Our spirit's very fair.
We love to make our Christmas trips,
From friend to friend we go,
And to all people that we meet
The way of kindness show.

(*The* GIFTS *remove the fifth veil from the* SPIRIT *and take a position at the right of the divan as the* CHILDREN *patter in from the left, sleepily rubbing their eyes and yawning.*)

A CHILD. Ooh! How sleepy I am!

SECOND CHILD. So am I, but there's such an exciting holiday spirit here in the Heart of the World, where all the Christmas Feelings are, that we just can't sleep yet.

MISTLETOE. Tell us, O Christmas Children, of your part in waking the Christmas Spirit.

SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS CHILDREN

(*Tune,—"Upidee."*)

CHILDREN (*gleefully*).
We've written notes to Santa Claus,
Goody, goody-oh!
And hung our stockings up because,
Goody, goody-oh!
Can't you guess what we're going to say?
Because 'twill soon be Christmas day!
Day of sugar-plums and toys,
Goody-oh, goody-oh!
Day of mirth and day of joys,
Goody, goody-oh!

(*Again they rub their eyes very sleepily and as the* DREAMS *steal softly in from the right, the* CHILDREN *move slowly to the left and then sink down as if overcome with sleep.*)

MOON (*surprised*). Why, what's the matter with the Children?

STAR (*with finger to her lips*). Hush—the Christmas Dreams are here.

(*During the Dream song and until the* CAROLS *come in, all the characters on the stage act as if overcome with sleep, with heads resting on their hands and with eyes closed.*)

SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS DREAMS

(*Tune,—"Sleep, Beloved, Sleep."*)

DREAMS (*very softly*).

Christmas Dreams are we,
Sweetest that can be,
Dreams of happiness and mirth,
Dreams of good-will on the earth;
In your sleep all softly stealing,
So we bring the Christmas feeling,
Fairest, sweetest that can be,
Christmas Dreams are we.

(*The* DREAMS *move very gently toward the* SPIRIT *and remove the last veil, fully revealing her sleeping figure; then they move to the right of the divan as the* CAROLS *gaily enter from the left.*)

A CAROL (*surprised*). What's this? Everybody asleep? Well, we'll soon wake them!

SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROLS

(*Tune,—"There's Music in the Air."*)

CAROLS (*with spirit*).

Come wake and hear our song!
'Tis a strain we would prolong.
We bring you tidings gay,
Of awak'ning Christmas Day.
Let us speed our message sweet,
'Til it flies on wings so fleet,
Telling hearts that day soon breaks
For Christmas now awakes.

(*During this song the characters all wake; the* CHILDREN *stretch and rise from the ground; the* YULE-LOG SPRITES *rise from their log and all on the stage join in repeating:*)

CHORUS. Let us speed our message sweet,
'Til it flies on wings so fleet,
Telling hearts that day soon breaks
For Christmas now awakes.

(*During this chorus the* SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS *opens her eyes, moves, and then sits up. At the end of the song she rises and waves her hand. All the Christmas Feelings sink to their knees as she sings.*)

SONG OF CHRISTMAS

(*Tune,—"Silent Night."*)

SPIRIT (*softly*).
Peace on earth, sweet good-will!
Out of frosty darkness still,
From the silent realms above,
Bringing gifts of Heavenly love,
Christmas comes to you,
Christmas comes to you.

ALL (*joyfully*).
Peace on earth, sweet good-will,
Out of frosty darkness still,
From the silent realms above,
Bringing gifts of Heavenly love,
Christmas comes to us,
Christmas comes to us.

CURTAIN

A Christmas Strike

A Play for Christmas for Four Boys and Three Girls

A Christmas Strike

CHARACTERS

COLD WEATHER, *a boy about fifteen.*
SNOWFLAKE, *a girl about eight.*
LOG FIRE, *a boy of small size.*
CHRISTMAS PRESENT, *a girl about ten.*
CHRISTMAS STOCKING, *a boy about eight.*
CHRISTMAS TREE, *a boy about fourteen.*
CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, *a girl about fifteen.*

COSTUMES

COLD WEATHER. A fur cap, fur overcoat, fur gloves, arctics, collarette made to represent icicles, mustache dipped in paraffine to represent frost.

SNOWFLAKE. A white cap and dress, white shoes and stockings. Cap and dress to be covered with cotton batten arranged to represent snow.

LOG FIRE. A red cap and suit partially covered with points of yellow to represent flames. Should carry log on which he sits.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Sheets of cardboard on front and back, covered with white paper, Christmas seals and large bow of red ribbon tied around.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. Seated in large black stocking stuffed to keep shape.

CHRISTMAS TREE. Cap and cloak of green to which are tied front and back boughs of Christmas tree. Interwoven among branches are tinsel, other Christmas ornaments, and electric lights, power of which is supplied by dry batteries carried under cloak. Lights should be run from a switch which can be turned on and off.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. Grecian costume, flowing sleeves, etc., made of soft white material, trimmed with silver tinsel. She should wear in her hair a band of silver tinsel with a silver star in the center.

A Christmas Strike

SCENE.—*Out-of-doors before the cave of the North Wind. Platform to be covered with snow, with two snow mounds upon which characters may sit. Time, the day before Christmas.*

(*Scene opens:* COLD WEATHER *and* SNOWFLAKE *seated on the two snow mounds* R. *and* L. *of stage.*)

COLD WEATHER. Of all the trouble I ever saw this is the worst. North Wind off tooting somewhere, no one knows where; probably down at the Equator, that's all the sense he has, and not a soul to carry me down to where men live.

SNOWFLAKE. And I don't see how I can go alone. I could fly, to be sure, but I'd be certain to melt away without you. But we *must* go.

COLD WEATHER. Who says must, anyway? I reckon those humans could have one Christmas without cold weather. They could get along with just ordinary sort of days without our blustering down.

SNOWFLAKE. Maybe so, but I think they'd feel rather queer.

Enter LOG FIRE *from* R., *carrying log which he deposits in center front of stage.*

LOG FIRE. Queer? Who says they'd feel queer? I think I'm the one to feel queer. Here I've been looking the whole morning for old Boreas and not a sign have I seen of him. (*Sits down.*) Jack Frost told me he'd agreed to meet him at nine o'clock the day before Christmas in order to get a good start. Here it is eleven and he's gone off without him.

COLD WEATHER (*with excitement*). Gone without him! Well, that's a nice howdy-do! Why didn't he look for me?

SNOWFLAKE. And me?

LOG FIRE. Well, Jack's a queer old sprite, anyway, you know, and he thinks he's going to have a lovely time nipping people's noses and toeses when they're not expecting him. Won't he cut a figure dancing down the street and pulling the ears and fingers of some youngster out without mittens and cap? Ha! Ha!

COLD WEATHER. Well, you're a cheerful piece, Log Fire. If I'd been treated the way you had by every one lately, I'd be grumpy as could be.

SNOWFLAKE. (*aside to* LOG FIRE). Doesn't he think he is?

LOG FIRE. What's the use! People don't want me much any more, though some people pretend they like me (*standing with fingers thrust in vest*) to dress up and show off with. Folks don't live with me the way they used to do. Log fire is out of date and people must be fashionable anyway. (*Sighs.*) But then some persons still like me and I believe many people would have me if they could, especially on Christmas eve.

COLD WEATHER (*with disgust*). Shucks! Don't fool yourself, people don't want any of the good old things. (LOG FIRE *bows and sits down.*) They're getting all sorts of high-fillutin notions. (*Enter* CHRISTMAS PRESENT, CHRISTMAS TREE *and* CHRISTMAS STOCKING. *They silently group around and listen to the conversation,* CHRISTMAS PRESENT *near* SNOWFLAKE *at* L.; CHRISTMAS TREE, R. C., *back;* CHRISTMAS STOCKING *at extreme* L., *near* COLD WEATHER.) Even Christmas Present has to be done up as if she were going to a summer party.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I should say so! First it's tissue paper and holly, then it's Christmas seals and cards and a white wrapper, with red ribbon. Such a fussing! People ought to be taught better.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING (*piping in wee voice*). They don't do that with me. They put the same nuts and oranges and little wee things at the toe that they used to do. (*Rather proudly.*)

CHRISTMAS TREE (*with scorn*). Oh, well, people don't use you much nowadays anyway. They like *me* better. Only, even I, Christmas Tree, beautiful as I am with my green branches, have to be half covered with tinsel and pretty balls and electric lights. Would you believe it? Electric lights! (*Flashes on lights which he turns on and off at intervals throughout play.*) Now, in the old times, they used to string cranberries and pop-corn and dress me all up in them and candles, and I must say I think I was quite as good-looking.

LOG FIRE. Oh! but you're so pretty now.

COLD WEATHER (*meditatively*). I say, people, let's fix those humans up by having a strike!

LOG FIRE. }
CHRISTMAS STOCKING. } What's that?

COLD WEATHER (*patronizingly*). Well, you see, we all agree not to do our Christmas work this year, and then perhaps those humans will learn a lesson.

SNOWFLAKE. Not go to their world!

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. Not a Christmas stocking!

LOG FIRE. Oh, for shame!

CHRISTMAS TREE. A capital idea! It'll serve them right, then they'll go back to their old customs.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT. And have simple presents such as the children want? Aye, aye, I vote for it.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. Do you think they'd have me more again?

CHRISTMAS TREE. Sure of it, leastwise people would who couldn't afford me, and that's lots!

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. Then I'll stay away.

LOG FIRE. What would the children do?

SNOWFLAKE. It would be so sad.

COLD WEATHER (*to* SNOWFLAKE). Well, you can't go anyway. Even if you do agree with Log Fire, he wouldn't help you to fly. So you *can't* go!

LOG FIRE. And there isn't any use of my going alone!

CHRISTMAS TREE (*with enthusiasm*). Hurrah—we're free. Let's have a holiday! What shall we do?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT (*after a moment*). Let's sing!

(*Song follows in which all join, speaking words very clearly. And* CHRISTMAS SPIRIT *comes in quietly into the background.*)

SONG

(*Tune,—"Jingle Bells."*)

We're free to have some fun;
Now what shall it be?
Oh, we'll skip and dance and run
So very merrily.
Let's play some games all day,
From now till it's quite dark
We're free from doing Christmas work,
Let's have a jolly lark —

CHORUS. Oh, how gay! Oh, how gay!
Isn't it great cheer?
Those humans now will mend their way
And sorry be this year.

(SNOWFLAKE *takes dancing steps in time to music across stage once during lines three and four, again during lines nine and ten.*)

SNOWFLAKE. But I don't want them to be sorry—think of the poor little youngsters—so disappointed.

LOG FIRE. I think they'll be sad—and who wants a sad Christmas?

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. It wouldn't be much fun for us if we knew the children were unhappy.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Besides it isn't the children's fault we have become extravagant in our presents. They like simple things.

CHRISTMAS TREE. You're right. They do love me. How they dance around me and act so happy!

COLD WEATHER (*disgusted*). You people are all silly—you're too sentimental for words. But (*more slowly and with thought*) still, I *do* love the children, and I must say I'd hate to disappoint them.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT (*stepping forward to* R., *front of stage, half facing audience*). I thought I could change your minds. You would all be unhappy at this blessed Christmas time in which Christendom has to be happy because Christ came to earth —*not* to help in the Christmas joy.

ALL (*in chorus with enthusiasm*). You're right.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. And then, friends, you've forgotten one thing, too, our dear old Santa!

ALL (*looking at each other and nodding*). Oh, that's true!

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. Dear old Saint Nicholas—who for so many years has helped the world be happy—would feel so sad not to have your help.

COLD WEATHER. We'll have to help.

CHRISTMAS TREE. If he needs me, I'll help.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING. And I.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT. And I.

LOG FIRE. Me, too. (*After a moment rises and looks at clock.*) I think it's almost time for him now.

SONG

(*All sing, including* CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, *to tune of portion of "Stein Song" from "The Prince of Pilsen," beginning with "Here's to."*)

Where is our Santa Claus we love?
Now we are waiting here,
Waiting to help in every way,
That we can do each year.
We are so glad he's coming now,
Coming to bring us joy,
Happiness glad to each mortal soul,
Joy for each girl and boy.

(*If* SANTA CLAUS *does not appear at close, song should be repeated.*)

CURTAIN

Santa's Surprise

A Christmas Exercise for Giving

By JESSIE A. KELLEY
Author of "The Pedlers' Parade," "Squire Judkin's Apple Bee," etc.

Santa's Surprise

NOTE

The play as given requires thirty-three children and a man to impersonate Santa Claus. The number of children taking part may be lessened if desired, any part being easily omitted without detriment to the other parts. Children may be in costume or not as preferred. Should costumes be wished both boys and girls could be dressed as fairies or brownies or the girls could be dressed as nurses, cooks, etc., the boys as marketmen, clerks, fruitmen and farmers. The songs and recitations suggested may be found in "Christmas Celebrations," by Joseph Sindelar. Price, 25 cents.

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Santa's Surprise

SCENE.—*A platform.* SANTA CLAUS *enters with empty sack over his shoulder. Two children are seen peeping in at door.*

SANTA CLAUS (*speaks*).

Oh, dear! oh, dear! alack! alack!
Christmas is almost here,
And here's this great big empty sack,
I cannot fill, I fear.

Although I've worked with might and main,
This whole long, glad year through,
Of presents still I've not enough —
Oh, dear, what shall I do?

For there are many little ones,
In this broad land of ours,
Whose lives are not all happiness,
Whose pathway not all flowers.

Some little hands are red with cold,
Some little feet all bare,
And some at this beautiful Christmas time,
Will very poorly fare.

Unless old Santa Claus comes with his pack,
To make a visit there —
But here's the great, old empty sack, —
I surely shall despair.

So completely am I tired out,
I sure must rest awhile.
Perhaps after that I'll find a way
To make those children smile.

(*Sits down in chair and falls asleep. The two children who have been listening at door tiptoe in, watching* SANTA *all the while.*)

FIRST CHILD.

Oh, did you hear what he has said?
He doesn't know what to do,
For Christmas Eve is almost here,
But still his work's not through.

SECOND CHILD.

I'll tell you what we'd better do,
Oh, it will be such fun!
We'll ask our friends to fill his sack—
Come, hurry, let us run!

(*Both children run out. Children come in two by two, form in line back of* SANTA, *then separate to form a semicircle. As they march they sing to the tune of "Lightly Row," Price, 30 cents.*)

Here we come, here we come,
With hearts light and full of fun,
If Santy should but move,
We would surely run.

Each and all, each and all,
Baskets on our arms do bear,
Thus we do Santy's gifts
Help him to prepare.

A CHILD (*steps forward and says*).

Let each one of us here,
Show what we have brought;
Hide it safe in Santa's sack,
Then leave before we're caught.

———, won't you be the first?
The rest then must make haste,
If we're to finish all our work
No minutes can we waste.

FIRST CHILD (*with mittens speaks, stepping to front beside* SANTA. *As each child finishes his recitation, he places his donation in* SANTA'S *pack and goes back to place*).

Santy said some hands were red with cold,
I hope they'll be no more,
For of mittens nice and soft and warm,
I've brought a goodly store.

Into his pack I'll tuck them away,
Then when he opens his eyes,
And sees them all laid there so neat,
Won't it be a surprise?

The children, too, will be surprised,
When on Christmas morn they find,
The many gifts which Santy's brought—
The things for which they pined.

I hope they'll all remember,
'Tis Christ's birth we celebrate,
And to his loving service,
Their young lives dedicate.

SECOND CHILD (*with stockings*).
Some little feet are cold and bare,
Perhaps these will help a few.
And keep the little toes snug and warm,
The long, cold winter through.

Gladly I'll put them into the pack,
For Christ said, "Have charity."
And, "Inasmuch as ye do to these,
Ye do it unto me."

THIRD CHILD (*with shoes and rubbers*).
Some shoes and rubbers too,
We'll surely not forget,
For very sad indeed 'twould be
To have their feet all wet.

I wish I'd many, many more,
To send this Christmas Eve,
That 'twas the best that I could do
He surely will believe.

FOURTH CHILD (*with candy*).

I'm afraid some of these same, very ones,
Will have very little to eat,
Unless old Santy brings to them,
Things for a Christmas treat.

So I've brought the candy all children love,
And here I'll tuck it away,
With wishes and hopes that they may have
A joyful Christmas Day.

FIFTH CHILD (*with oranges*).

Christmas, I'm sure, would not be complete,
Unless some fruit we add,
So I have brought some oranges,
The best that could be had.

When they them in their stocking find,
So big and round and yellow,
I'm sure they'll say old Santy is
A right, good jolly fellow.

SIXTH CHILD (*with apples*).

I've brought apples round and red,
To each child to be given.
I'm sure they'll think this Christmas Day
Almost like unto heaven.

Every good and every perfect gift,
In the Bible we are told,
Cometh down from the Father above,
Who watches his lambs in the fold.

SEVENTH CHILD (*with nuts*).

To all the good things stored in here,
I'll add of nuts, a lot,
More bless'd to give than to receive,
The loving Christ-child taught.

I'm sure my day will more joyful be,
If I can truly think,
That all the children in this place,
Have enough to eat and drink.

EIGHTH CHILD (*with meat*).

Oranges yellow and apples red,
Nuts and nice, sweet candy,
All good—but when you're almost starved,
Some meat does come in handy.

So I think Santy'll find a place,
For these pieces I have brought.
When into those cheerless homes he goes
What a miracle will be wrought!

NINTH CHILD (*with turkey*).

This turkey must have been so fat,
That he could hardly hobble.
I'm glad he was for that means more,
For little folks to gobble.

Perhaps he was so proud and vain,
That no one could endure him.
If that was so, they surely took
The quickest way to cure him.

TENTH CHILD (*with cranberries*).

Here's a bag of cranberries
To make into some sauce.
Gee-whiz—with that turkey brown,
Won't it be just boss?

With all the other good things there
And well seasoned dressing
I hope they'll not eat so much,
Their feelings'll be distressing.

ELEVENTH CHILD (*with potatoes*).

Some potatoes he will surely need,
To go with the meat he'll send,
A good, big bag of those he'll find,
I'll say "They're from a friend."

I hope they'll nice and mealy be,
Then with meat and gravy brown,
I'm sure they'll say their dinner is
The very best in town.

TWELFTH CHILD (*with turnips*).

The dinner still would be incomplete,
If no turnips were found there.
Of those we've plenty in our home
And still a few to spare.

So to the pile I'll add my mite,
With wishes glad and hearty,
That every child in this glad land
May share in a Christmas party.

THIRTEENTH CHILD (*with squash*).

How could they ever get along
Without a squash so yellow?
I'm sure they'd vote old Santy Claus
A most forgetful fellow.

Some of this I hope will go
Into a pie so round.
For pies are pretty jolly stuff
Wherever boys are found.

FOURTEENTH CHILD (*with onions*).

Of onions, too, there must be a few,
So those I will provide,
And by these squash and turnips fine,
I'll lay them side by side.

I hope to very many dishes,
They'll add the nicest flavor,
To soups, to stews, to dinners all,
They'll give the proper savor.

FIFTEENTH CHILD (*with groceries*).

Some dear, old grandma'll want her tea,
Of course with sugar, too,
Fresh butter, eggs and cereal,
With raisins just a few.

Perhaps a pudding she will make,
With sauce and fat plums many.
If grandchildren come to visit her,
I guess they won't leave any.

SIXTEENTH CHILD (*with cake*).

I hope that at this joyous time,
No child without cake will go.
I think 'twould be a dreadful shame,
For I do love it so.

My mother's just a splendid cook,
She made this cake for me
And stuffed it just as full of plums,
As full as it could be.

SEVENTEENTH CHILD (*with pie*).

Well, I hope no boy will have to do
Without a piece of pie.
Surely that would be enough
To make him moan and sigh.

No matter what else I do eat,
For pie I've always room.
Can't help it if those anxious folks
Do fret and fuss and fume.

EIGHTEENTH CHILD (*with bread and flour*).

I think we'd better send some bread,
For that's the staff of life.
Here are some loaves just fresh and brown,
All ready for the knife.

And here's a bag of flour, too,
For not long this bread will last,
So they will surely need some more,
Soon after Christmas's past.

NINETEENTH CHILD (*with jelly*).

Among dear Santy's many friends,
Some surely will be ill.
Perhaps if nothing else tastes good,
A little jelly will.

A few tumblers I have brought
To add unto his store,
And if they like it very much,
Next year I'll send them more.

TWENTIETH CHILD (*with doughnuts*).

A fat and puffy doughnut,
For luncheon after school
Is good, e'en if the doctors say
That 'tis against the rule,

To eat between your meals.
When home from school I go,
I'm always just about half-starved —
Empty from head to toe.

TWENTY-FIRST CHILD (*with cookies*).

A crisp molasses ginger-snap,
No boy will e'er refuse.
If growing boys do eat too much,
You surely must excuse.

I'm always glad in the cooky jar,
To find this special kind.
I'll leave this bag for Santa Claus
In his heaped-up sack to find.

TWENTY-SECOND CHILD (*with underclothes*).

Some thick, warm underclothes,
The children must not lack.
A great big bundle some one's sent
To put right in the pack.

May they keep some child warm
When the wintry winds blow chilly.
To keep the things we do not need,
Is surely worse than silly.

TWENTY-THIRD CHILD (*with boy's suit*).

Just look at this suit I have here,
With pockets just a-plenty,
Here's one and here and here and here,
There must be almost twenty.

But I hope that each one will
Be full as it can hold,
Of strings and knives and tops and balls,
And marbles to be rolled.

TWENTY-FOURTH CHILD (*with girl's dress*).

My present to some little girl,
Is just the prettiest dress,
All trimmed with braid and velvet bright,
She will be proud, I guess.

I hope to some one it will go,
Whose cheeks are red and rosy,
Then in it, I am sure she'll look,
Sweeter than any posy.

TWENTY-FIFTH CHILD (*with books*).

I'm usually quite a noisy fellow,
So, at least, my people say.
But how can any boy keep quiet,
And still have fun at play?

But when I've books like these I hold,
By Alger, Henty, Optic,
Then for a little space at least,
You can almost hear the clock tick.

TWENTY-SIXTH CHILD (*with girl's coat*).

This warm and cosy jacket,
I surely have outgrown,
But there are many it would fit,
If only they were known.

Santy will see so many girls,
As far and wide he'll travel,
I'm sure he will the problem hard
For me, no doubt, unravel.

TWENTY-SEVENTH CHILD (*with overcoat*).

My mother says an overcoat,
Some boy will surely need,
And that a friend in want
Is sure a friend indeed.

I hope some boy, dear Santy'll find
Whom it will fit just right.
A little boy about my size,
Also my shape and height.

TWENTY-EIGHTH CHILD (*with caps*).

The stocking cap is, to my mind,
The very greatest dandy,
No matter if your hair won't keep
So smooth and slick and spandy.

If skating or sliding you do go,
And old Jack Frost comes near,
Just pull it down with a good, quick jerk
And he cannot touch that ear.

TWENTY-NINTH CHILD (*with games*).

Perchance there may be some child sick,
With fever, measles, mumps.
Oh, dear, the days do go so slow,
It just gives one the dumps!

So these games I'll to them send,
If long in the house they must stay,
Perhaps they will somewhat help
To pass the time away.

THIRTIETH CHILD (*with sled*).

That this sled is a flyer
I can truly testify.
You wonder that I bring it here —
I'll tell the reason why.

I like to slide so well myself,
I want others to have fun; —
And I'll tell you a secret —
I'm to have another one.

THIRTY-FIRST CHILD (*with skates*).

Who doesn't like on the smooth ice
To swiftly slide and skate?
Only one must careful be
Not to hit one's pate.

No healthy boy should be without
Some skates all shining bright.
Could any present more
A youngster's heart delight?

THIRTY-SECOND CHILD (*with dolls*).

No doubt among his Christmas mail,
Many letters Santy's had
Asking for dolls, both great and small,
So I'll make some girls' hearts glad.

By sending these dolls of various size,
Black, brown and flaxen curl.
For what would Christmas be
Without a doll to a little girl?

THIRTY-THIRD CHILD (*with toys*).

Of course the girls will want their dolls,
Likewise the boys want toys,
So this armful I have brought
To make glad the little boys.

Here's a drum, a top, a horn,
A whistle that's a daisy.
I hope they won't make so much noise,
They'll drive their mothers crazy.

ANY ONE OF CHILDREN (*says*).

I think we've here most everything
That any child could wish.
How in this lovely, heaped-up sack
They'd dearly like to fish.

Since we have worked so steadily
And have our labor done,
Don't you think we'd better wake Santa up
Then peep in to see the fun?

(*Children form circle and dance around* SANTA, *singing: Tune, "Yankee Doodle," Price, 35 cents.*)

ALL.

We've filled old Santy's sack right up,
We've filled it to the brim;
We've filled old Santy's sack right up,
And now we'll wake up him.

(*Repeat song, slyly pulling* SANTA'S *hair, whiskers and coat; then run out to peep in at door or hide around stage.* SANTA *stretches, yawns and finally wakes and arises.*)

SANTA (*speaks*).

Oh, I must hurry to my work.
I fear I've slept too long.
Can it be I dreamed it all,
Or did I hear a song?

(*Finds sack filled and exclaims in surprise.*)

Why, here's my sack just heaped up full!
Have fairies been at work?
Did all the elves and brownies gay,
Think Santy was a shirk?

(*Discovers children peeping.*)

Aha! I see you peeping there
Each little fay and elf—
Come in, come in, yes, every one,
I want some fun myself.

(*Children enter.*)

I thank you kindly, one and all,
For all the work you've done.
And many homes I'll visit now,
Ere yet does rise the sun.

Where all was sad and cheerless, drear,
I'll joy and gladness bring.
And every heart, both young and old,
Will joyous praises sing.

'Tis very seldom I have time
To visit in this way,
As I am busy all the year,
Preparing for Christmas Day.

Since you have done my work for me,
I have some time to spare.
Could you not speak or sing or play?
'Twould be a pleasure rare.

ONE OF THE CHILDREN (*says*).
To try to entertain you, sir,
We'll surely do our best,
I'll gladly do my little share,
As I know will all the rest.

(*A child speaks or sings; other children follow, as many as desired. The following would be an appropriate program. All not otherwise specified are in "Christmas Celebration," Price, 25 cents, by J. C. Sindeler.*)

Song—Santa Claus (anything suitable).
Recitation—"'Twas the Night Before Christmas."
Recitation—"Trouble in the Doll's House."
Recitation—"A Note to Santa Claus."
Song—Martin Luther's Cradle Hymn, *Price, 35 cents.*
Recitation—"Fair Warning to Santa Claus."
Recitation—"Poor Santa Claus."
Recitation—"Jes' Afore Christmas," *Price, 30 cents.*
Song—"Jolly Old Santa Claus."

(SANTA *applauds each number vigorously. After children have finished* SANTA *looks around audience and says.*)

SANTA.
I see other of my friends
Are with us here to-night,
To hear from any one of them
Would give me great delight.

(*Any talent may be here introduced.*)

SANTA (*turns to children and says*).
Although you've very busy been,
I've done some work myself.
My sacks were not all empty thus,
Here's a full one on this shelf.

(*Takes down full sack and opens.*)

I think I'll see what I can find
For all the children here.
I hope it'll be just what they want
To add to their Christmas cheer.

(*Distributes gifts; then glancing at clock, exclaims.*)

Alas, the time is flying fast!
I must tear myself away.
With many, many, many thanks
For the help you've given to-day.

So good-night to you all I'll say,
May you very happy be.
Don't forget to hang your stocking up
Or else have a Christmas tree.

[*Exit* SANTA.

CURTAIN FALLS

The Syndicated Santa Claus

A Christmas Entertainment for Children in Two Acts

By BERTHA CURRIER PORTER

The Syndicated Santa Claus

CHARACTERS

SANTA CLAUS.
MISS BANKS, *a stenographer.*
TWO OR THREE DIRECTORS (*thinking parts*).
JIMMIE, *the office boy.*
MESSENGER BOY.
NEWSBOY.
ROBERT COOPER, *a father.*
SUSIE COOPER, *a mother.*
CHILDREN:
MAUD,
JENNIE,
DICK,
CHARLIE,
RUFUS,
and as many more as desired.

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COSTUMES

SANTA CLAUS. In Act I he should be dressed in a modern office suit, but his facial make-up should be that of the conventional SANTA CLAUS. The contrast between his face and suit should be very marked.

In Act II he should wear the regulation SANTA CLAUS suit, red coat, and knee-breeches trimmed with white fur, black top-boots, red cap also trimmed with fur, pack on his back. During part of the act he is disguised in a long black mantle or cape.

Other costumes modern and appropriate.

TIME

ACT I.—Day-time, three weeks before Christmas.
ACT II.—Christmas Eve.

SCENES

ACT I.—Offices of the Consolidated Santa Claus Syndicate, Limited.

ACT II.—A corner of the park, at night.

The transformation of the tree may be easily arranged by having the side away from the audience trimmed and wired with electric lights. Just before the transformation this side should be turned toward the audience in place of the plain, snow-laden side.

Plays about forty-five minutes.

The Syndicated Santa Claus

ACT I

SCENE.—*A modern up-to-date office; large desk, well-fitted up, revolving leather chair, several other substantial chairs, safe in one corner, typewriter, with* MISS BANKS *working at the machine. As the curtain rises,* SANTA CLAUS *is bowing two or three directors from the room. The door closes, and* SANTA CLAUS *comes wearily back and seats himself at the desk.* MISS BANKS *works a moment at the machine, then hands him a number of letters.*

MISS BANKS. These letters are all ready for your signature, sir. You'll find them all exactly as the board voted.

SANTA CLAUS. You may leave them. I'll look them over. That is all, you may go now. (*Exit* MISS B. SANTA *alone, leaning his head on his hand.*) Only three weeks to Christmas, and, oh, how little that name means now. It isn't much as it used to be in the good old days. Ah, me! If I had known what was coming—but I felt old and tired, so, when the millionaires had exhausted all the schemes of earth to invest their money and that enterprising young man with the smooth tongue came to me with the proposition to syndicate me—my years of experience against their capital—it looked good to me. I yielded. But if I had realized what it meant to be syndicated, I'd have worked till I dropped in the harness before I would have consented. Why, Christmas is no more Christmas now—my poor old reindeer eating their heads off up here in the park—my old sleigh that I've used till it's shockingly shabby, mounted in a glass case in the museum—almost my very clothes (*with a quick glance at the safe*)—but, there, I've managed to keep my clothes from the relic-hunters so far. Instead of

reindeer and sleigh with its jingling bells, the linemen rig up their pneumatic tubes to the chimneys, and presto—all the bundles are wrapped, tied, marked, stamped with the Syndicate stamp, and shot, each into its respective stocking at precisely the same moment. Reports come in by wireless from all the sub-stations to central here that everything is O. K., and down come the tubes for another year. No more "Night before Christmas and all through the house" business. It is a very ancient and out-of-date flat indeed, that doesn't have its "Christmas line with stockings attached." Why, they are as much expected as electric equipments and pre-digested food cupboards. My fragrant ropes and wreaths of evergreen are superseded by the most outrageous paper contraptions. (*Takes from the desk a paper garland and undoes it scornfully.*) Look at that! What an insult to self-respecting evergreen that grows all the year with an ambition to make some home bright and beautiful at the Christmas season. But if I allow myself to dwell on these matters I shall be ranting soon. (*Presses a bell. Enter* JIMMIE, *the office boy. He is rather small, and wears a new suit with many buttons. He regards* SANTA *with awe.*) Well, well, sonny, I've never seen you before. I guess you must be a new boy, aren't you?

JIMMIE. Yes, sir, I'm pretty new. But my suit's newer.

SANTA. It certainly is a fine suit. You look rather a smart boy—do you know who I am?

JIM. Yes, sir. You're Santa Claus. That's what they tell me, but you don't look the way I thought you did.

SANTA. No? How's that?

JIM. Your face looks all right, but it doesn't fit with those clothes. I thought you wore a red suit all trimmed with white stuff, and had holly somewhere round you and great high, shiny boots. And where are your reindeer?

SANTA (*much pleased*). Young man, your conversation is the most edifying I've listened to for some time. But where did you get all these notions? Surely there hasn't been a Santa Claus like that in your day.

JIM. No, but I've seen a picture of it in a book my aunt had when she was a little girl. And my big sister saw you once. She had a tree one year and you came—don't you remember?

SANTA (*gravely*). I should have to think. You see, I used to go to so many trees. And I used to climb down chimneys, too, and fill the stockings that hung round the chimney-piece. And sometimes I had to hurry to get away before I was seen.

JIM. I know about that. We hang up our stockings now, but the Syndicate fills them, don't it? There's a tag on every present says so.

SANTA. The Syndicate does a good many things I could wish it didn't. Go get me the last hourly paper, boy—I want to read the news. (*Exit* JIM.) I declare, I'm upset. I didn't know there was a soul left on this modern old planet that really believed in me. And he asks me "don't I remember his sister's tree?" I wish —— (*Enter* JIM. *with paper. As* SANTA *settles himself to read,* JIM. *goes over to the corner where he sits, watching* SANTA *intently.* SANTA *reads a little, then suddenly throws down the paper in a rage. He rises and strides about the room. Excitedly.*) I won't stand it! It's too much! It strikes a blow at the very vitals of all tradition —it's outrageous! And to think that I was not consulted. They dared not—they knew what I would say ——

JIM. Oh, what is the matter, Mr. Santa Claus?

SANTA. Matter? An enterprising concern advertises "Imitation Christmas Trees"—listen to this. (*Reads from paper.*) "Labor Saving Scheme! Our patent Ready-to-Use Christmas Tree. Neatly packed in box with full directions for setting up. A complete and realistic imitation of the trees of our fathers. A great improvement on the crudities of nature. Symmetrical in every part. Non-inflammable. Non-destructible. Made in three odors—Pine, Hemlock and Fir Balsam. Order now." Do they think I'm going to stand that? I have tamely submitted to automobiles, air-ships, pneumatic tubes, wireless messages, and even kept silence in the presence of paper garlands, but imitation Christmas trees—no, never! (*Enter a* MESSENGER BOY *with a letter.*) What's this?

MESSENGER. An answer, sir.

SANTA (*reading aloud*). "Mr. S. Claus: Dear Sir: Through the untiring efforts of the Consolidated Santa Claus Syndicate, the government has at last been prevailed on to take over the tremendous task now devolving upon you, that of reading and answering the so-called Santa Claus letters with which your mail is flooded at this time of year. We take great pleasure in conveying this, no doubt, welcome news to you and request you at once to hand over to our messenger any and all accumulated mail coming under that head. Very respectfully, Directors of the Santa Claus Syndicate." (SANTA, *in the calmness of utter disgust.*) I'll reply. You may say to those who sent you, young man, one word, *Never.*

MESSENGER. Very well, sir. [*Exit* MESSENGER.

SANTA. Another blow—and to-day, of all days, when this little youngster has stirred all my yearnings and made me so unutterably homesick. (SANTA *drops into a chair and sits with his head in his hands.* JIM. *creeps up to him and finally puts one arm shyly about his neck.* SANTA *lifts him into his lap.*) I don't know what I'm going to do, little man.

JIM. Won't the old Syndicate do what you want it to?

SANTA. No, boy, you've hit it. It won't do a thing I want it to.

JIM. Then, why don't you strike? That's what folks do when other people won't do what they want them to.

SANTA. I'll do it! I'll do it! They can do nothing without my orders. (*Puts* JIM. *down hastily.*) I'll just send off a few messages that will put things where the Syndicate will find itself somewhat disarranged. Here, boy, send this telegram to Toy Headquarters.

JIM. Wireless would reach 'em quicker, sir.

SANTA. I'm done with all things modern. A good old-fashioned telegram will do for me. Besides, the Syndicate controls all the wireless lines and they would refuse to send the message. Here it is. "Do no further work unless by my special orders. Sell no goods. SANTA CLAUS." And this one to the Caretaker of the Christmas trees—"Send no trees to any one unless ordered over my signature. SANTA CLAUS." And this to all the agents at the sub-stations—"You are discharged. No more Christmases. SANTA CLAUS." (*Exit* JIM. *with telegrams.* SANTA *rushes to safe, opens it and takes out a large bundle.*) Whew! It smells dreadfully of moth-balls. But a good swift sleigh-ride will soon cure that. (*Shakes out his suit and puts it on.*) They will be somewhat surprised at the museum when they find "Case C., containing the original sleigh of Santa Claus" empty, I'll be bound.

Enter JIM., *who stands amazed, then rushes joyfully to* SANTA.

JIM. Oh, how splendid you are! If you only had the sleigh and the reindeer.

SANTA (*catching* JIM. *up on his shoulder*). We'll have them soon, my boy. First to the park—then to the museum. Oh, but it will seem good to get the reins in my hands once more. "Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!

On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen——" I'm happy once more—I'm free! The Syndicated Santa Claus has struck!

(*As they dash through the door*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE.—*A corner of the park. Sturdy pine tree growing at right. Evergreen hedge at left and back. Snow on hedge and tree. At back, partly concealed by the hedge, are the reindeer, who can be heard, stamping and shaking their bells. The sleigh is partly visible. It is a moonlight night and the stage should be as dark as possible. As the characters enter, it may be lighted a little, but the effect of moonlight on the snow should be kept as much as possible.*

(*Enter* SANTA *and* JIM. *They are clapping their arms as if to warm themselves.*)

SANTA. Well, sonny, how does it seem to get home again?

JIM. Pretty fair, but everybody seems awfully glum and cross, somehow. It doesn't seem like Christmas Eve. When we rode along over the cities, did you see how quiet everything was? And in all those windows where we peeked, I didn't see a single stocking hanging up, did you?

SANTA. Why should we? There isn't going to be any Christmas, you know.

JIM. Yes, I know. Seems too bad, though. Seems all the worse since I've seen your house.

SANTA. Liked it, did you?

JIM. I guess I did. I liked it when I first saw it, all shut up, but when we came away I could hardly bear to leave. Those old men making Noah's Arks were so nice and funny. I've got a cow, one of them gave me, in my pocket. So I'll have one Christmas present anyway.

SANTA. Yes, it did seem good to get back to the old home. Of course, things were a bit dusty where the house had been shut up so long, but we soon changed that. And I was fortunate to get all the old workmen back again. I was so pleased to see their joy at getting to work again. Poor fellows, they are certainly good friends of mine. And they do fine work. Strong hand-made toys, made on honor and to stand all sorts of knocks and bumps from little hands—none of your cheap

machine stuff. I wonder what has been going on here while we have been away. It does seem quiet—too quiet, almost. How can we find out without being discovered?

JIM. I hear a newsboy now. I'll get a paper.

SANTA. He mustn't see me. He may be a strike-breaker or a picket in disguise—I'll hide.

(SANTA *hides behind the hedge. Whistling is heard, coming nearer. A small ragged* NEWSBOY *enters, calling his papers. He recognizes* JIM. *and greets him with surprise.*)

NEWSBOY. Hullo, Jimmie, where you been? Lost yer job, ain't yer?

JIM. I've been away—on a trip.

NEWSBOY (*scornfully*). Yes, yer have! Where? Most likely, when yer firm bust up and ye lost yer job, you'se afraid to go home, so you'se been bunkin' out.

JIM. What do you mean—my firm bust up?

NEWSBOY. Say, where you been, anyway? On de level, don't you know de Santa Claus Syndicate has gone out o' business?

JIM. Really?

NEWSBOY. Sure. The manager struck and skipped, and the directors, they tried to run it, but they couldn't get no toys nor no trees, an' all the managers of the sub-stations quit, so they had to go out o' business.

(SANTA *has been gradually creeping nearer and nearer, listening eagerly.*)

JIM. What are folks going to do for Christmas?

NEWSBOY. Ain't goin' to have any. Can't. They can't find Santa Claus, and so of course they can't have any Christmas.

SANTA (*appearing in a long, dark cloak, which conceals his suit*). I thought the people had managed these many years without any Santa Claus. Your well-managed Syndicate has done it all, I understand?

NEWSBOY. Sure, the Syndicate done a good deal, but, you see, we all knew Santa was in with 'em, kind o' takin' a rest-up, as it were, so we stood for a good many t'ings we didn't like. But when the word got round that Santa had struck, why, we wouldn't stand fer the Syndicate no more.

SANTA. Do you mean, boy, that there are people who r want Santa Claus and the old-fashioned Christmas l again?

NEWSBOY. Sure thing.

JIM. Perhaps he'd come back if he knew that.

NEWSBOY. I wish he would—I t'ink a real Christmas tre would be fine. But I got to be goin'. Me business will suffer So long, Jimmie. So long, old man. Wish yer Merry Christmas, anyway. [*Exit* NEWSBOY.

SANTA (*turning to* JIM., *bewildered*). Do you suppose he knows what he's talking about?

JIM. Of course he does. He's sold papers three years, and he knows a lot. Why, the ward politicians speak to him. But say, you are going to have a Christmas, aren't you? 'Cause why did you bring all those things in the sleigh?

SANTA. Force of habit, I guess. Thought they might work in handy. You never can tell when you are going to need things. I wish I knew if that boy really knew what he was talking about. I'll tell you, if I can find three more people who really miss Christmas and want it back again, want the merry spirit and the love of giving and the good green trees and the beautiful holly—then I'll have a Christmas. But I don't believe there are three people in all this world who care enough about me to want all that. Hark, I hear voices—come.

(SANTA *and* JIM. *crouch beneath the tree. Enter a man and a woman, a father and mother.*)

MOTHER. I wish we had something for the children.

FATHER. I tried everywhere, Susie, but I couldn't buy a single present. None in the market is what they say in all the stores.

MOTHER. It isn't so much the presents, though of course I'd like to give them something. But I want a tree for them.

FATHER. The artificial ——

MOTHER. Don't speak of them. When I say a tree, I mean a real Christmas tree. A thick, beautiful, fragrant growing thing like that one over there. Bob, I suppose we could not go into the woods and cut one?

FATHER. No, dear, I'm afraid not. It's all in the reservation, and they won't allow you even to pick flowers.

MOTHER. Well, I'm so sorry. Yet I can tell them about

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Christmas as it used to be. They know the story now, and I'll tell them once more how Santa used to fill my stockings when I was a little girl. I believe I'll let them hang theirs to-night, even if they say there isn't to be any Christmas. Somehow, here in the park among the evergreens I feel as if Santa Claus could not really desert us on Christmas Eve. Come, Bob, we'll go home and hang up the stockings.

[*Exeunt* FATHER *and* MOTHER.

JIM. (*to* SANTA). There's two folks that's pretty sure there's going to be a Christmas. They want it bad enough, and so do I, and we make three—you promised on three.

SANTA. I'll fill those stockings if there isn't another present ever given. I'm glad I brought some extra things along.

JIM. Hush, here comes somebody else. (*Enter a crowd of children.* JIM. *comes out and joins them. During the following conversation* SANTA *makes frequent trips from the sleigh to the great tree, bringing parcels.*) Hullo, where are you going?

MAUD. We're hunting for Santa Claus—have you seen him?

JIM. Santa Claus—who is he?

DICK. He's the man that gives the Christmas presents.

JENNIE. And he's struck, so we can't have any Christmas unless we can find him and persuade him to come back again.

JIM. I thought the Syndicate did all the Christmas business.

DICK. Aw, folks used to think so, but 'twas Santa Claus all the time. He used to do it all alone when my pa and ma were little, and it was ever so much more fun then. We're going to ask him if he won't please do it all alone again, and if he says he's too old and can't, we're going to tell him we'll help him.

CHARLIE. Yes, we want him to come back. We want a Christmas tree.

MAUD. Yes, and we want him to bring his reindeer, too. Those reindeer in the park were his, and when he struck, he took them away with him.

RUFUS. I want to see him go down a chimney.

(*Jingling bells are heard.*)

DICK. I hear bells now. They don't allow sleighs in this part of the park.

MAUD. Perhaps we have found him.
ALL. Let's look! Let's look!

(*They scatter about and soon discover the reindeer and the sleigh, which is now empty.*)

CHARLIE. Hurrah! Here's his sleigh.
MAUD. And all the reindeer. Aren't they lovely?
RUFUS. Santa Claus can't be far away.

(SANTA *appearing. As he appears, the stage is brilliantly lighted. The tree flashes into view, gaily decorated and lighted, and hung with gifts. All shout with rapture.*)

ALL. Oh! oh! Santa Claus—Santa Claus! A Christmas tree—a Christmas tree!

Enter the MOTHER *and* FATHER *and the* NEWSBOY.

SANTA. Yes, it is Santa Claus and a Christmas tree. Oh, good people—dear people, you have restored my faith in this old earth again. I find I have more friends than I thought I had.

ALL. Yes, indeed, we've missed you dreadfully, and oh, Santa Claus, we are so glad you're back again.

SANTA. Friends, dear friends, it warms the cockles of my old heart. I've heard all the good, kind things you have said about me, and I have sent word to the toy factories to the Christmas-tree store-houses, and already the spirit of Christmas is spreading over the land. Never again will I try to abolish Christmas. But it shall go on in the good old way, and never, no, never, will there be another Syndicated Santa Claus. (*To the* MOTHER.) And now, please, I want the address of the house where those stockings are hanging. There are some toys in my pack that won't be happy till they are nestling in the toes of those very stockings. (*The* MOTHER *whispers to him.*) Thank you—right on my way. I'm off—this is my busy day. And now scatter—scatter, all of you, and spread the news. Tell all the children to hang up their stockings. But be quick, for Christmas Eve is on us and I've much to do. Here is your tree—enjoy it. Get your friends to join you, and a Merry Christmas to you all. Good-bye—good-bye!

ALL. Good-bye, good-bye, dear Santa Claus! A Merry Christmas!

(*He jumps into the sleigh, the bells jingle, he calls to his reindeer, as the people wave and shout,*)

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen ——"

(*His voice grows fainter as he vanishes and*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

KRISS KRINGLE'S

PANORAMA

OF

PANTOMIMES, TABLEAUX, READINGS, RECITATIONS,
ILLUSTRATED POEMS, MUSIC, &C.

ARRANGED BY THE AUTHOR OF "PRESTON PAPERS."

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BIBLE READINGS.

Isaiah 53—entire.

Luke 2: 8–14.

The latter may be given as a concert recitation in a variety of ways:

1. By class of boys and girls, simply.

2. By same, girls costumed in simple white, gilt or silver crowns, or band with star in front, hair crimped or waved over the shoulders; boys in drapery of Palestine shepherds, with crooks.

3. All in white drapery (sheets) standing on pedestals, with wings.

4. Dressed as Jews of that date.

5. All together, with chorus of Angel voices from gallery or distant room in appropriate anthem.

PANTOMIME.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

In one Scene.

Stage arranged to represent variety (or "99-cent") store. *Be sure* that the "counters" come nearer together at the rear than at front of stage, to give right perspective. Long tables may be used, behind which the clerks stand. Behind them are shelves—may be arranged from wooden boxes set in tiers—filled with Christmas goods. Placard on outside curtain, or at side of front, with "Holiday Goods," "Christmas at Our Store" or some similar legend in large letters. Clerks may be both boys and girls; "check" and "cash" ditto; floor walker (near front) a boy with moustache put on, long trousers, frock coat, etc.; at a desk in rear is cashier making change constantly; near her a "bundler" boy at table tying up packages; book-keeper

at work on ledger; shoppers, both sexes, in out-of-door costume. They come in covered with snow (white, soft paper, torn into bits) which they shake off with various degrees of caution, and then "shop." Some take a long time to decide on what they get; some purchase but one article, while a few go away without having done anything more than look at everything, ask the price, and be a general nuisance—as in real life. Shoppers may represent man and wife; farmer; young lady; two young men; several children, and others *ad lib.*—according to talent and platform.

N. B. Introduce as many humorous episodes as possible—such as can be adapted to just your locality. *Use originality* in filling in this outline.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
And belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day.
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

But in despair I bowed my head,
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

SUGGESTIONS.

Let some one hold a triangle (behind the curtain or in an adjoining room, with an open door) striking it softly, *and in time*, on the words "peace on earth, good will to men."

THE PRINCE OF LIFE.

(Written expressly for this Magazine.)

BY FRED W. ROSS, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Still night was on Judea's land—
  Long ages since have gone;
A patient little shepherd band
  Was waiting for the dawn.
The weary throng to rest gave way;
  All nature seemed to sleep—
As oft the billows cease their play
  Ere tempests rock the deep.

Then watched the shepherds there alone,
  When, in the shades of night,
A Vision fair upon them shone
  With rays of holy light.
At first they shrank with mortal fear
  Before the stranger's face;
But spake the Angel words of cheer
  For all the human race.

Fear not, ye men! for lo, I bring
  Good tidings—of Christ's birth.
To-day is born a Savior, King,
  The Prince of Life and Earth!

A manger is the monarch's bed—
In swaddling vestments curled
Behold creation's Mighty Head!
Redeemer of the World!

Then came great choirs from heaven's band
How joyful their refrain!
How firmly did God's promise stand!
Naught doeth He in vain.
The scene of grandeur quickly passed,
Their earthly mission done,
The shepherds went with purpose fast
To find the little one.

No kings nor princes came to see
This wondrous Little Child
But wise men sought Him out with glee;
Upon Him prophets smiled.

* * * *

Great nobles lived when Christ was born,
Their record did not last.
His name shall evermore adorn
The Present and the Past.
Great nations, since, their course have run
Their annals fainter grow.
But Christ can never be outdone,
Time's ravage never know.

THE STORY KATHIE TOLD.

Now stay right still and listen, kitty–cat, and I'll tell you a story.

Once there was a little girl.

She was a pretty good little girl, and minded her papa 'n' mamma and everything they said, only sometimes she didn't, and then she was naughty; but she was always sorry, and said she wouldn't do so any more, and her mamma'd forgive her.

So she was going to hang up her stocking.

"You'll have to be pretty good, 'lest 'twon't be filled," said her mamma.

"Less maybe there'll be a big bunch of sticks in it," said her papa.

Do you think that's a nice way to talk, kitty-cat? I don't.

So the little girl was as good as she could be, 'less she was bigger, and didn't cry and slap her little sister hardly any be tall, and always minded her mamma when she came where the chimney was, 'specially much.

So she hung up her stocking.

And in the night she got awake, kitty-cat, and wanted it to come morning; but in the morning she didn't get awake till 'twas all sunshiny out doors.

Then she ran quick as she could to look at her stocking where she'd hung it; and tru's you live kitty-

cat, there wasn't the leastest thing in it—not the leastest little mite of a scrimp.

Oh, the little girl felt dreadfully. How'd you feel, s'pose it had been you, kitty-cat?

She 'menced to cry, the little girl did, and she kept going harder 'n' harder, till by'mby she screeched orfly, and her mamma came running to see what the matter was.

"Mercy me," said her mamma. "Look over by the windo' 'fore you do that any more, Kathie."

That little girl's name was Kathie, too, kitty-cat, just the same's mine.

So she looked over by the window, the way her mamma said, and oh, there was the loveliest dolly house you ever saw in all your born life.

It had curtains to pull to the sides when you wanted to play and pull in front when you didn't.

There was a bed-room, kitty-cat, and a dinner-room and a kitchen and a parlor and they all had carpets on.

And there was the sweetest dolly in the parlor, all dressed up in blue silk. Oh, dear. And a penano to play real little tunes on, and a rocking chair, and oh, kitty-cat, I can't begin to tell you half about it.

I can't about the bed-room either, nor the dinner room.

But the kitchen was the very bestest of all. There was a stove—a teenty tonty mite of a one, kitty-cat,

with dishes just 'zackly like mamma's only littler, of course, and fry pans and everything; and spoons to stir with, and a rolling pin and two little cutters-out, and the darlingest baker-sheet ever you saw.

And the first thing that little girl did was to make some teenty mites of cookies, 'cause her mamma let her; and if you'll come right down stairs, kitty-cat, I'll give you one.

Cause I was that little girl, kitty-cat, all the time.

A. C. H. S.

SUGGESTIONS.

This may be given as a pantomine, to accompany the reading—or as a recitation by a little girl who sits in a low rocker, addressing her cat which she holds in her lap. The tone should be childlike and the whole thing simply given.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

(*Selected.*)

Ring, Christmas bells!
Ring, merrily ring,
Ring tidings of great love;
The love of men
To men again
Resembling that above.
Tell the tale of generous deed
By prosperous man, to man of need.

Ring, Christmas bells!
Ring, cheerily ring.
Ring tidings of great peace,
Of wrong act righted,
Friends re-united;
Ring unkind thoughts surcease.
Tell the story of wrongs forgiven,
For the sake of Christ in heaven.

Ring Christmas bells!
Ring, happily ring.
Ring news of love divine,
Of faith renewed,
Bad deeds eschewed,
In the sweet Christmas time.
Tell the story of man's salvation;
Ring loud the Christmas proclamation,
Sound it forth cheerily once again:
Peace on earth, good will to men.

SUGGESTIONS.

The above makes a beautiful Concert Recitation and the class should be arranged according to "register," as in a quartette.

METHOD. Sopranos recite the first two lines. All give third line. One with specially pure, clear voice, recite the rest of the stanza. All repeat first two lines. First two lines of next stanza taken by "tenors." Remaining lines by voice of great sweetness and with legato movement. All repeat the first two lines. Altos and bassos take the first two lines of last stanza, dividing the rest between two

voices of great power and smoothness. All repeat the first two lines and last.

N. B. Ring the word "ring" prolonging the word on the "ing" sound, the last time it is given on each stanza. Let the last line, the last time, be given special reference to musical effect, and if it can be echoed *pianissimo* it is all the more beautiful.

THE LADY JUDITH'S VISION.

MRS. E. V. WILSON.

It was Christmas morning, the bells tolled loud and clear.
Awake, awake! oh, sleepers! Christmas Day is here!!
Awake, awake! This morn we bring to you again
This message down from heaven: On earth peace, good will to men.

Within her curtaincd chamber, the Lady Judith heard,
But in her aching bosom no chord responsive stirred,
Though on the wall before her an ancient picture hung
In which the infant Jesus to his "blessed Mother" clung.

She sees the Son and mother. She hears the joyful bells—
And her heart grows hard and bitter, as the tide of memory swells.
"And what to me is Mary's Son," she cries in anguish wild,
While on my darling's little grave the winter's snows are piled?

"And what to me are Christmas bells, when I no more may hear
The voice that all my music made, fall on my longing ear?"
Then sudden silence filled the room; a silence so profound,
My Lady, awe-struck, raised her head aad wondering looked around.

No more four walls confined her gaze; before her, far and wide,
She saw a beauteous valley spread, with hills on either side.
Amid the verdant grasses clear streams of water strayed;
And trees, with sweet fruits laden, a pleasant shadow made.

Fair temples crowned the lovely slopes, bright flowers bloomed everywhere,
And birds with brilliant plumage with music filled the air.
But now among the flowers and underneath the trees
And floating in the crystal floods, what is it my Lady sees?
Can they be earthly children, or are they angels bright,
These happy little creatures, all robed in spotless white?

And now the childish voices in sweetest singing blend.
"All hail! All hail!" they joyful cry, "He comes, the children's Friend!"
And walking in the valley she sees a noble form.
These happy children leave their play, and all around Him swarm.

They clasp His hands, His garments; they cling about
His feet,
And lift to Him their dewy lips to give Him kisses
sweet.
But one among their number, in silence walked, apart.
The tears fell slowly from his eyes, and sobs welled
from his heart.

And the Lady Judith wondered, "Why is the child so
sad,
When all his little playmates seem so full of life and
glad?"
And Lord Christ, looking tenderly on all the children,
smiled,
As He held His arms extended toward the little, griev-
ing child.

And soon the shining golden head is to His bosom
pressed.
Why grieves thus my Lady's heart, within her throb-
bing breast?
As thus she murmurs to herself, unheard by all save One,
"Ah! my darling mourns his mother, in the arms of
Mary's Son!"

But the little one is speaking, and she eager bends to
hear,
For the rosy lips are pressing closely to the Savior's
listening ear.
"Dear Christ," they trembling whisper, "will you not
let me go
To comfort my poor mother? I hear her grieving so.

Oh! let me go and tell her how blest the children be
Who are brought from earth to heaven, to live and love with thee."

And she heard the dear Christ answer: "If you go back again,
You must stay the time allotted unto the sons of men.
You must share their bitter sorrows, mayhap their shame and sin,
And pray and weep for heaven's rest, ere you can enter in."

And sobbing still, the child replied: "My mother loves me so!
I hear her crying day and night. Dear Christ, you'll let me go?"
The Savior kissed him lovingly, then placed Him on the ground,
While all the children, wondering, in silence stood around

"I'll take you to your mother now," He said, and led the way.
The Lady Judith shrieked aloud, "Oh, stay! My darling, stay!
I would not have you back again." At once my Lady woke,
And now the Christmas bells again the chamber's stillness broke.

Again four walls confined her gaze, and Mary's pictured face
Looked down with yearning tenderness from its familiar place.
A moment wrapped in thought she lay; then, springing from her bed
"Hail! blessed Mother, blessed Son, hail! this Christmas morn" she said.

She dressed herself in richest robes and called her servants all.
"Make haste," she cried; light glowing fires and deck the banquet hall.
Go forth, and bring in the children; bring every child you meet;
Search all the city's byways. Search every lane and street.

"Look for the homeless, friendless; for every little one
Is dear to me for Jesus' sake and for my own dear son
Who dwells with Him in heaven and happy can not be,
Because—O, Christ! Have pity!!—because of sinful me!!"

Then loudly rang the castle bells; and soon, from far and near,
The children came, and laughed and sang and joined the Christmas cheer
That night, as on her pillow the Lady Judith lay,
A light shone all around her, like the brightness of the day.

And she saw the happy valley; and heard the children sing:
"He comes, He comes! The children's Friend! He comes, our Lord and King!"
And akin to pain the rapture that filled the mother's breast,
As the voice she knew rang sweeter, and for her above the rest.

'Twas the voice of the beloved, and she knew no sorrow now
Weighed on the tender little heart, or dimmed his shining brow.
And evermore she walked content, along life's thorny road,
With heart upraised in thankfullness to where her child abode.
And evermore on Christmas, when she heard the joy bells ring,
"All hail!" she cried, "our blessed Lord, the children's Friend and King."

TABLEAU.

GETTING THE TREE READY.

Tree in background, partly decorated with popped corn, gilt and silver stars, gifts, etc.

In foreground some are winding evergreens, some stringing popped corn, some writing labels for gifts that are lying around on the tables, chairs, floor, etc.

Ingenuity in grouping will produce realistic effects. *Don't crowd the stage* with too many performers.

This may be given as a pantomime.

SWIPSEY'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

EDWARD MARSHALL.

There wasn't very much on the table—in fact it wasn't very much of a table, being made of a dry goods box stood on its side. The room belonged to the grocer, but he had told them they could have the use of it for Christmas night. In the corner there was a little cracked stove, which was so hot that it shone like a big lump of Christmas cheer in the semi-darkness.

Pretty soon "Swipsey" came in out of the rear of the city street. He had a few unsold papers under one arm, and a small, a very small, bundle under the other. With him was his sister Suze. They were orphans, trying to make their own way. She had had good luck and had sold all her papers. She took what was left of Swipsey's stock and spread a nice clean one over the dry goods box. Then he unrolled his bundle.

"Oh, Swipsey!" said the girl.

There was a can of cooked canned beef, and a little box of figs.

Pretty soon the others began to come in. There was "Mickey" with a little packet of coffee, some sugar, and (what luck!) some cabbage that the apple-woman on the corner had cooked and given him, with big tears in her honest, Irish eyes, when he told her about the dinner.

"It ain't much, Mickey," she said, "but may the howly saints make it taste as relishin' as if it was as big as a barn, and cooked in a gowld skillet!"

There were five charter members of the dinner party, so to speak. "Rocks" (so named from his manner of defending himself in his frequent "scraps") came into the room next. He, too, had a little bundle, which was undone with due ceremony.

When Piper came in, he stopped a minute, just inside the threshold, and held the door open while he beckoned to some one on the outside. "C'mon in," said he; "the fellers 'll all be glad to see you."

Then entered a little fellow not more than six years old. He was very much embarrassed, and held his fingers to his lips. Piper, by the way of introduction, said:

"Fellers and Suze—this 'ere little cove (Piper himself was a big cove, having seen thirteen years, and being the oldest member of the dinner party) is comin' to our Chrismuss. He's just gone into the paper sellin' biz, an' he an't got no boodle. I'm a takin' care o' him till he gits started. See?" For a minute an embarrassed silence hung over the little group. Then the little people opened their hearts to the new comer (and they were big hearts for such very small bodies) and he was one of their dinner party.

Piper explained to him:

"You see" said Piper, "we fellers an' Suze had heard a lot about Chrismuss. We don' know 'gzacly what it is; but we do know that everybody what is anybody has a Chrismuss dinner. So we jes' chipped in and—and (waving his hand around the room) here y' are.

"But I ain't chipped in" said the new comer.

"Well, wot if ye ain't? y' can next time." So that was settled. Suze in the meantime had produced a pail from somewhere, and an old pan from somewhere else; and some broken crockery from still another place.

"Youz'll make the coffee, and warm the cabbage 'n' meat, darlint," said Mickey. "Yez are the only woman here." So Suze went at it.

It wasn't long before everything was ready, and they gathered around the box. The savory odor from the coffee-pot and stew-pan had tickled the twelve little nostrils and the six little mouths were as eager to taste the poor little dinner as ever yours was to pick your succulent Christmas turkey bones.

They fell to, at once. "I'm 'fraid the coffee ain't very good," said Suze. But she smiled the satisfied smile that every housewife smiles while decrying her own dainties, and was much as pleased as ever you were, my fine lady, in similar circumstance, when Rocks exclaimed in answer.

"Finer 'n Delmonico's, I'll bet!"

Before long the dinner had been eaten. They sat around the table for awhile, and the little six-year old fell asleep with his head on Suze's knees. She passed her fingers lovingly over the little fellow's forehead, and by and by leaned over and kissed him.

"Yez give us a bully Chrismuss, Suze," said Mickey, when at last the little party broke up; and from the throats of all the guests rang out in chorus, "You bet!"

CHRISTMAS STATUARY.

Figures are to be all draped with sheets, unless otherwise specified, arms bare; eyes closed; faces powdered; wigs (whiskers also, when used at all) of course white yarn.

KING CHRISTMAS. On pedestal made of large box covered with white cloth or paper. Large crown of stiff, white paper; hair somewhat long and very thick; beard; basket covered with white, in outstretched right hand, drapery falling loosely over the right arm; turkey, powdered with flour in left hand.

The Christmas Dolls. Children of various sizes, in more or less elaborate costumes of white, representing girls, boys, and babies in long clothes.

The Christmas Angel. A young lady with large wings, ample drapery, blowing trumpet of white bristol board. *Poise* in this should be very carefully looked after—grace being indispensable to fine effect; star on forehead; *all* this figure may be sprinkled with diamond dust.

Christmas Messenger. Two little children in out of door costumes (of white—may be paper, tissue or other soft paper) carrying a large basket between them, packages and basket covered with white.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

J. G. HOLLAND.

There's a song in the air!
There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer
And a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire, while the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth;
For the virgin's sweet boy
Is the Lord of the earth.
Aye, the star rains its fire, and the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

In the light of that star
Lay the ages impearled.
And the song from afar
Has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.

We rejoice in the light,
And we echo the song
That comes down through the night
From the heavenly throng.
Aye! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST.

HELEN ANGELL GOODWIN.

Night in the Baron's castle,
Night on the windy moor;
The best of nights for the very rich,
And the very worst for the poor.
For the yule-log blazed in the ancient hold,
And the beggar shrank from the biting cold.

The Baron's only daughter,
The little Lady Grace,
Was better dressed than any guest,
And fairer in the face.
But never a thought of pride had she,
As they gaily danced 'round the Christmas tree.

When lo! an ill-clad stranger
Stood in the firelight's glow.
His head was bare, his golden hair
All wet with melting snow.
"Whence comest thou?" the children cried—
But only a dim, sweet smile replied.

"It is the little Christ Child,"
Low spake the Lady Grace.
"I dreamed last night that a halo bright
Shone 'round that very face.
And He said: 'Be sure you have eyes to see,
For I shall stand by your Christmas tree.'

"So when they spread the table
A chair I bade them set
At my right hand, for a guest more grand
Than all assembled yet.
And my mother said, when the servants smiled.
'Tis the second sight. Obey the child.'"

Then all the noisy children
Were silent for a space;
But no one heard him speak a word
Though the smile grew on his face.
Till they saw a halo, pure and faint,
'Round the stranger's head, like a pictured saint.

In strides the stately Baron
To view the children's cheer.
"Who has the place by the Lady Grace?
How came this beggar here?"
Said the Lady Grace: "God pardon thee!
The little Christ-Child dines with me."

The Baron staggers backward
And smites upon his breast.
Before him stands, with clasped hands,
One more unbidden guest.
"Hast now come back here from the dead,
Grace, my sister Grace?" he said.

"They told you falsely, brother;
Seven years ago to-day,
With a father's blame and a blighted name
I left the castle gray.
But at Christmas time of every year
I have stood outside and seen you here.

"My boy comes always with me,
Or else I could not come.
He will ever be like a babe to me,
For he is deaf and dumb.
He slipped from sight when my head was bowed.
And I saw him next in the youthful crowd.

"Among the happy children
I left my smiling boy
For light and heat and enough to eat
Are all he can enjoy.
But I'll take him now and go away
And come no more on Christmas-Day."

"Nay then," replied the Baron;
"Thou shalt not go again,
Thy seven years of toil and tears
Amid the scorn of men
Are enough, insooth, for a life time long,
And we've all done wrong; we've all done wrong."

There followed hearty greeting
Where people wept and smiled;
And the Lady Grace, with a warm embrace,
Welcomed the silent child.
But she wept that night on her mother's breast
That the Christ-Child had not been her guest.

"Nay grieve thee not, my daughter.
The Christ of God *has* come.
But he chose to speak through a woman, weak,
And a child who is deaf and dumb.
'And as ye have done' in the Book, saith He,
'To the least of mine, ye have done to me.'"

SUGGESTIONS.

This poem may be given with moving tableaux and a fine effect produced. The scene should show the banquet table, guests, Baron, Little Lady Grace, her mother, the deaf mute child and his mother, each following the movement of the poem, at the proper place.

The reading should be given feelingly, but without affectation—either with or without the tableaux.

KITTIE TO SANTA CLAUS.

Jolly old Kriss, what a fellow you are
Riding all over the world in the air,
Sliding down chimneys through ashes and smoke,
Fur-covered Kriss, you're a regular joke.

How do you manage to carry such loads?
How do you manage to keep the right roads?
How do you know all the good girls and boys?
Why don't we wake with your clatter and noise?

How can you guess what we all like best?
How can you please all the birds in the nest?
What are you doing the rest of the year?
Sleeping, I s'pose, with your little reindeer.

If I thought you'd appear with a shout and a caper,
Jolly and fat like the one in the paper,
I'd keep awake; but I know that you stay,
When children are watching, quite out of the way.

SUGGESTIONS.

The above may be recited by a little girl or boy, at any entertainment where Santa Claus is to appear. The child should do this in a simple, conversational tone, while S. C. moves from place to place, decorating the tree, filling stockings or loading up. *Fun* may be *gotten out of this.*

THE DRIVER'S CHRISTMAS.

BY MRS. M. L. RAYNE.

"Yes, sir, it is a pleasant time, as you say, for many folks; and it is a good work for those who have their fill of happiness and to spare, to look them up that are less fortunate. It seems now to me, as if I

never want to hear of Christmas and its pleasures, without wishing myself dead."

"You see it's only one man's experience, but there's plenty like it in the world. No, I don't mind telling you; it can't make it any harder. Kitty—that's my wife, sir—and I were young and strangers when we came out West to start in life; and she was kind of delicate and not used to roughing it, while I was a farmer's son and was more accustomed to hard fare. I never could tell how Kitty loved me first, or why she ever loved me at all, poor girl; but we were in love with each other from the time we attended the district school together, and I was only too happy when she promised to be my wife; and though her folks were unwilling, and tried to make a lady of her—she was one always, God bless her—we were married at last with their full consent and came West to live.

"Maybe you have heard of misfortune following a man, sir; well, I was that man. We had enough between us to start a neat little business, and were getting on nicely, when, in one night, it burned down, and not a penny of insurance. Then I got a situation in a store, and baby Kitty was born and died, and that made my wife low-spirited, and she was not over strong; and last winter, you will remember, was a hard one. I wanted her to go home and stay a bit, and be nursed well by her folks; but my dear girl smiled and

put one thin arm around my neck, and asked: 'Do you want me to go, Dick?' and I saw she had cast in her lot with me for better or for worse, and it did seem as if it was all worse."

There was a long silence, during which the driver flicked the ears of the leaders with his whip, and looked sad and thoughtful, and the passenger on the box wondered if he would get home in time for Christmas, and if the driver was hurrying for him or on his own account to meet Kitty, and he said at last:

"You got out of the woods, all right, did you?"

"O, it was about last Christmas I was telling you sir, wasn't it? At least that's what led to it. Well, just as I was getting on my feet again, I took down with rheumatic fever, and for two months I never walked a step and all that time Kitty took care of me. When I got up I noticed the furniture was all gone but the bed I lay on, a table and stove, and Kitty was as thin as a ghost. There never was such a brave little girl. She declared she wouldn't ask for help from strangers; and as to writing home of her trouble she never would do it. I knew, sir, some help must be had and I wrote a plain statement of the case to my father, and asked for money enough to help me start fresh, and I did not tell Kitty. It broke my heart to see her looking so wretched, and her love and care for me were like a reproach; but I

got out at last, and then, sir, she took to her bed—just worn out. The first day I was able to be on the street I went to the man that owns these horses, and proprietor of the biggest livery in town, and said to him:

"For God's sake, give me a job!"

"I knew him a little you see; and if he had guessed I was hard up he would have helped me sooner; but that was my pride.

"Come down to-morrow evening and I'll talk to you," he said. I knew then that he would help me on my feet again.

"The next day Kitty slept most of the day, but when it came time to go out I roused her up a bit, to tell her what I was going out for. She smiled kind of sad, and put her arms—O, so thin they were—round my neck.

'Dear old fellow!' she said, 'you've had a hard time of it; kiss me, Dick, and tell me again that you love me!'

"That went through my heart like a knife; but I smoothed her curls back from her white forehead, and told her to cheer up, better times were coming.

" 'What day is this?' she asked, kind of solemn-like.

" 'It's the day before Christmas,' I said, 'and I'm going to have a feast to-night when I come back. It's Christmas Eve, and you shall hang up your stocking. Kitty; wait and see what I'll bring back to you!'

"She smiled a little and reached both hands around my neck.

"'Kiss me good night,' she said, 'or good bye!'

"'I'll kiss you for luck, my baby,' I cried; 'and now just go to sleep till I get back with the good things I'm going after.'

"She lay looking at the moonlight, and I drew the thin, old quilt and her own shawl close about her to keep her warm—for there was hardly a coal of fire left—and went out whistling to keep her courage up, and my own too. I went first to the post-office, where the evening mail was being distributed to a crowd—letters, presents; something, it seemed, for everybody, but for me there was nothing. The livery proprietor was my only hope. What if he failed?

"Well, sir, he did not; he gave me work to begin on the next week when I was stronger and he handed me a week's pay in advance. On my way back something prompted me to look in at the post-office again, and there was my letter; it had been overlooked in the hurry, and my father had sent me what I had asked for and a line of good cheer besides. I was nearly crazy with excitement; but I stopped long enough to fill a basket with good things and to order more for the next day. When I got home our poor room was all in a glory with the moonlight, and that and the bells ringing made it so solemn that I quieted down into a feel-

ing of thankfulness, and I didn't wait to get a light, but went and sat down on the bed by Kitty and said:

"'Wake up, my girl! Our luck has changed. I've got work and money; and our troubles are all over. Kitty, darling, wake up and see what I've brought you'——and—and—

"'Well,' said the passenger, drawing a long breath, as the man paused, 'go on! and—and—'

"'Kitty was dead, sir!"

PANTOMIME.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE STREET

In One Scene.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES: *Policeman*, large and in regulation uniforn; two *firemen*, fireman's costume, one carrying trumpet and pail, the other a ladder and pail; *newsboy*, with papers; *young lady* and gentleman, ordinary costume—lady wearing fur cape and carrying muff; *old gentleman*, with white hair and beard—wears muffler, large cap, carries cane, stoops as he walks; *beggar girl*, poorly clad, carrying empty basket; *minister*, in black suit, silk hat, white neck-tie, kid gloves; *tramp*, hands in pocket, rough-looking cap on back of head, trousers tucked into boots, no overcoat, but collar of the one worn turned up to ears, *Irish woman*,* with full skirt of calico, big shoes, red shawl put on "cornerwise," hood, carrying basket of vegetables, groceries in packages, a chicken, etc.; *Santa Claus* in typical costume, and loaded according to tradition.

Stage is barren of everything except whatever will help indicate a

*This character gives plenty of scope for fun, if taken by a boy and so announced.

street at night; lights dim; floor covered with white cloth, *not flat*, but irregularly (things may be placed underneath to produce this effect) to represent snow; evergreen bushes near curtain at sides, and in the rear, powdered with lime; window in background displays goods or toys (may be constructed of box—glass front is not necessary, though it should be *lighted*) if preferred, the "window" may be a frame, opening into a house, curtained, but with curtains sufficiently drawn to show family party within, and children at the window—but this requires deep stage.

ACTION.

Characters appear "by twos and threes and single," as fancy and time dictate—some from one direction, some from the other. The movements of the policeman, tramp and beggar girl, are slow; of the firemen also when they return, but should be *active* when going to the fire. The other characters move more quickly; all are more or less covered with snow (made of torn paper, cotton batting in tufts, and flour—the latter can not be put upon the costumes of the well dressed.) Policeman, tramp, and beggar girl may each appear several times; the firemen twice (from opposite directions), the others but once. Girl appeals with outstretched hand to each traveler, and Irish woman divides her basket-load with her toward the last. Santa Claus and policeman are the "latest things out," the former having met and loaded the beggar girl, and given the tramp a well-filled wallet. The cry for "Fire" should come from the outside and early in the "procession," so that the return of the firemen does not awaken a suspicion that it was a false alarm. As that is sounded everybody on the street hurries toward the scene—and new ones may be introduced, if you have other characters whom you wish to use in unimportant places.

The plot gives scope for originality and may be added to, or some of it omitted, as circumstances permit or demand.

THE SNOW ANGEL.

BY WALLACE BRUCE.

The sleigh bells danced that winter night;
Old Brattleborough rang with glee;
The windows overflowed with light;
Joy ruled each hearth and Christmas-tree.
But to one the bells and mirth were naught:
His soul with deeper joy was fraught.
He waited until the guests were gone;
He waited to dream his dream alone,
And the night wore on.

Alone he stands in the quiet night,
He piles the snow in the village square;
With spade for chisel, a statue white
From the crystal quarry rises fair.
No light save the stars to guide his hand,
But the image obeys his soul's command.
The sky is draped with fleecy lawn;
The stars grow pale in the early dawn;
But the lad toils on.

And lo! in the morn the people came
To gaze at the wondrous vision there,
And they called it "The Angel," divining its name,
For it came in silence and unaware.

It seemed no mortal hand had wrought
The uplifted face of prayerful thought;
But its features wasted beneath the sun,
Its life went out ere the day was done;
And the lad dreamed on.

And his dream was this: In the years to be
I will carve the angel in lasting stone.
In another land beyond the sea,
I will toil in darkness, and dream alone.
While others sleep I will find a way
Up through the night to the light of day.
There's nothing desired, beneath star or sun,
Which patient genius hasn't won.
And the boy toiled on.

The years go by. He has wrought with might.
He has gained renown in the land of art—
But the thought inspired that Christmas night
Still kept its place in the sculptor's heart.
And the dream of the boy, that melted away
In the light of the sun, that winter day,
Is embodied at last, in enduring stone—
Snow Angel in marble—his purpose won.
And the man toils on.

THE ANGELIC SONG.

IVY ENGLISH.

While the stars are silent shining, and the world is hushed in sleep,
I can hear the angels singing in a chorus grand and deep.

Come the strains from far-off hillsides, through the vista of long years.
Listen to the wondrous story angels chant to listening ears!

Sweet and low, now louder swelling, till the heavenly arches ring!
To the wondering shepherds telling "Christ is born! Redeemer! King!"

Following in glad attendance when he left His throne above,
Lingering, hovering, till the Christ Child lay in Mary's arms of love.

How their pinions softly fluttered as the promised hour drew nigh!
With what tender voices uttered all the strange, sweet mystery,

Till the wonder was accomplished, then they sang their triumph song,
Then across Judea's waters rose their chorus full and strong!

Listen to the gracious "tidings to all people;" hear it still!
"Tidings of great joy" and comfort, echoing from hill to hill!

"Glory in the highest!" ringing, ringing ever on the air!
"Peace and good will" ever bringing to each human heart a share!

Not in vain the angels' joy-notes, not in vain the Christ was born;
Millions join the heavenly anthem each returning Christmas morn.

SUGGESTIONS.

A chorus may be stationed in an adjoining room, to sing as occasion demands. At close of first stanza, something "grand and deep. After second stanza, a chant, "low and sweet." After the sixth, something "full and strong." Finally, any good Christmas anthem. (See list on last pages.)

PANTOMIME.

FILLING THE STOCKINGS.

In One Scene.

Curtain rises discovering family room in usual condition when Santa Claus is expected. Stockings hung on chairs, in pairs; light all out except in grate. Things none too orderly—so that Santa occasionally tumbles. He enters from rear, with pack on back (a big

coffee sack, with open mouth) from which one may see dolls, toys and whip sticking out; carries various packages, large and small, and a drum not wrapped. Relieves himself of his load, sometimes winking at audience and showing what he means to put in this stocking, what in that. He moves swiftly but quietly until all is done, then "loads up" as before, buttons up great coat, waves "adieu" to audience and disappears.

Curtain.

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Christmas morning, and broad daylight!
Who do you think was here last night?
Bundled in furs from top to toe;
I won't tell, for I think you know.

Who was it came from cold Snowland,
Driving gaily his eight-in-hand,
Sleigh piled up with wonderful toys?
Who was it? Tell me, girls and boys.

Who was it down the chimney crept,
While everybody soundly slept;
Filled the stockings, and tapped them all
With "Merry Christmas, one and all."

Who went back 'neath the bright starlight,
Reindeer scampering with all their might?
I won't tell, for it's very clear,
If you are good, he'll come next year.

Christmas morning, and hurry away,
Cousins and aunties are waiting to-day,
Waiting to welcome the big and the small,
Hark! hear them shout "Merry Christmas to all."

SUGGESTIONS.

The above recitation may be given after the pantomime "Filling the Stockings," p. 37.

The "shout" may be given by outside crowd, and with a variety of tone, accent and time—but with "volume."

TABLEAUX.

THE CHILDREN'S DAY.

1. *Preparation.* 2. *Filling the Stockings.* 3. *Christmas Morning.*

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

Father; in dressing gown and slippers.

Mother; ordinary house dress, covered with white apron.

Children; oldest in usual suits, but with appearance of hastily made toilets—shoes unbuttoned, hair tumbled, etc. *Youngest* in night robe of white (thrown on over clothing) with bare feet.

First Scene. Curtain rises, showing sitting room with mantel-piece in background; mother at center-table on which is lamp, packages in manilla paper, doll's clothing, books just taken out of papers, etc.; father in foreground at left, undoing packages. Large bundles, still tied, on floor at right.

Second Scene. Stockings are hung in pairs, one on each chair, on which lies and hangs clothing that belongs to the child whose stockings are there. Shoes or boots placed by each chair. Father is

filling stockings at one chair in center of foreground, mother at another, near. Bundles have all been opened, papers lying on the floor. Some stockings have been filled.

Third Scene. Father and mother in rear, standing, father's hands in pockets, no coat on, hair somewhat rumpled; mother in wrapper, hair hastily put up, both watching the proceedings of the children; baby in front, in large chair with arms, her red stockings in her lap, one nearly empty, looking into the others; one girl near, displaying large doll, dressed; boy with cornet at his mouth; an older girl at left of baby with large new book; smaller boy with skates.

AROUND THE WORLD WITH SANTA CLAUS.

(*Adapted.*)

A Geographical Recreation.

Come if you wish to join us; jump quickly in the sleigh;
Our reindeer team is ready, and we'll soon be underway.
Around the world with Santa Claus we're going to take our flight,
At speed that beats Miss Nellie Bly completely out of sight.

Though we may travel well enough on dry land with a team,
When we wish to cross the ocean we have to take to steam.
Old Santa much enjoys the trip, and says there's nothing finer
Than to sniff the breeze upon the deck of a crack "Atlantic liner."

The voyage o'er, without mishap we land in Britain's isle,
And take a cab, on top of which our trunks and traps we pile.
The jolly school boys Santa spy, and give him lots of chaff—
But at that game he's quite their match, and on them turns the laugh.

For those who love good feeding here's a sight that's very jolly—
Plum pudding most delicious and boar's head decked with holly.

Of old, in Merrie England, they were borne on Christmas day
Unto the castle table, in this stately, pompous way.
The guests, no doubt, delayed not to clear them from the plate,
For good things tasted then as well as at the present date.

In the frosty land of Norway, folks fasten to their feet
Long wooden skates called *skees*, with which they travel most complete.
So Santa and his party put on a pair of these,
And down the icy hill-sides dart through the wintry breeze.

To the ever-frozen regions of the Northern Frigid Zone,
To the home of seal and walrus, and the Esquimau we've flown.
But though this chilly atmosphere may suit the Polar Bear,
We think that for our own part we prefer a milder air.
So not very much extended will be our visit here.
And we soon shall take departure for a climate not so drear.

Our next scene lies in Germany. There, we find, appears
Black Rupert, a grim fiend, whom every youngster fears.
Beside him is the Christ-child, arrayed in garments white,
While St. Peter, with his keys in hand, stands forth upon his right.
In the center is St. Nicholas, the Bishop, kind and good,
Who's the friend of all young people that behave just as they should.

To every house the party comes on Christmas Eve, to hear
How all the little boys and girls have acted through the year.
For those who've not been naughty, nor parents caused to grieve,
Upon the lighted Christmas-tree they pretty presents leave.
But those of whose behavior they get a bad report,
Receive a gift from Rupert, not of a pleasant sort.

On Christmas Eve in Holland, through queer old peak-roofed towns,
St. Nicholas, the kind-hearted, on a donkey goes his rounds
With nice presents in his basket, for each obedient child,
And a switch to whip the naughty ones, who have been bad or wild.

"The Bambino" tableau forms in Italy's fair clime—
A favorite pageant at the merry Christmas time
The crib is shown of Jesus, the little Holy Child,
With his virgin mother, Mary—and Joseph kind and mild.
Shepherds adore, and angels above
Chant their message of peace and Christmas love—
While Bethelhem's star sends down its ray
To guide the Wise men on their way.

O'er the lonely sterile wastes of Arabia's desert land
No beasts except the camels can travel through the sand.
So Santa Claus upon their backs bestows his precious freight,
And climbs aloft himself, to ride in solemn state.

To have it warm at Christmas, to us seems very queer.
But in Australia's golden land it's the warmest time of year.
Santa can't find reindeer here; so the only thing to do
Is to travel 'round upon the back of a bounding Kangaroo.

Our journey o'er, we enjoy a feast, with Santa as the host,
And wind up the festivities with this most cordial toast:
"Here's a health to Santa Claus, the friend to girls and boys;
May his heart be ever full of mirth—his pack be full of toys."

SUGGESTIONS.

The above recitation is prepared for this number with a special view to the needs of rural school rooms. It may be used in several ways—with appropriate tableaux, a pantomime or a geographical recitation, pointing to the various places mentioned; or with a child in costume to come in after the reading of each stanza, taking a place on the stage and remaining there until the end of the reading—when all join in a fancy march or drill.

PANTOMIME.

ON THE QUIET.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES: Widow in plain black dress; hair parted and combed down over her ears; white rolling collar (may be made of paper) and clean white apron; little boy, five or six years old, scant, thin clothing, holey shoes; girl a little younger, poorly clad—but none of them ragged nor dirty; two young ladies in warm out-of-door costumes.

First Scene.

Curtain rises showing widow and children in plainly-furnished room, small fire in a poor stove (may be a kerosene "heater"); dim amp on supper-table, scantily supplied; widow faces audience, seated

at side of the table; boy at one end; girl at the other. Girl passes bowl for milk, receives a little; boy passes his bowl, gets the last drop. Girl passes plate for more bread; gets the last crust. Widow eats nothing, but pours and drinks tea, occasionally wiping a tear away, quietly, that the children may not see. Girl again passes bowl; mother shakes head and sorrowfully shows, by upturning pitcher, that there is no milk; boy asks for bread with same result. Children look at each other and laugh; the little girl gets down and goes around to her mother, climbing up in her lap, putting arms about neck, laying head on shoulder, and occasionally kissing her. All leave table and mother clears it—boy and girl helping at first, then playing about room while mother sits at the table from which dishes and cloth have been removed. She sews on heavy "shopwork" with very serious face which lights up when appealed to by either child, who play with less and less zeal, finally coming to mother's knee to pray and kiss her good-night, finally disappearing through door at side. Widow gives away to grief after they have gone, but keeps trying to recover herself and sew. Knock is heard at door opposite that out of which the children went. Widow goes to door and admits two young ladies, each bearing a basket filled with "Christmas cheer," one having groceries and a cake, a chicken, apples, etc.; the other having clothing, toys, books, etc. Young ladies empty baskets, putting things on table, while widow expresses gratitude in the face and by dumb show. After young ladies go out, she retires to rear of room and kneels by chair.

Curtain falls and low, soft music plays behind curtain.

Second Scene.

Mother and children around breakfast table, amply supplied, and with books, toys, etc., on table, children constantly leaving table to get or see something else. All look happy.

Curtain, with jolly Christmas chorus sung.

JACK FROST AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

S. J. BURKE.

Away up at the North Pole
  Lives Jack Frost.
Sir John Franklin went hunting for him,
  And that's how he got lost.
For though Old Jack goes traveling around
  Calling on high and low
He never asks people to visit him
  In his palace of ice and snow.

But there he lives at his ease
  All the summer long,
Dining on ice-cream,
  And drinking ice-water—*strong!*
There where the "midnight sun"
  Outshines the Northern stars
He holds his court and smokes
  Icicles for cigars!

But when the winter comes
  The old fellow shakes himself,
Oders out his sleigh
  And takes the whip from the shelf.
And making all tight and fast,
  Like a householder wise and true,
He comes down here to see
  What mischief he can do.

Betaking himself to the woods
He pinches with fingers cold,
The chestnut and maple trees
And they flame with scarlet and gold.
The vines and the sumacs, too,
Turn brilliant red with rage.
And he showers on the ground
The loveliest foliage.
But when he comes to the pines
The hemlocks and cedars, too,
He says, "Let them keep their leaves-
'Twould never, never do
To spoil the children's fun
By laying these branches low.
Santa Claus will soon be here
Looking for Christmas trees, I know.

And so my little folks,
As the Christmas time draws near,
Old Santa Claus goes with his hatchet
Out in the woods so drear.
And wherever he sees a tree
With dark leaves overgrown,
With a chuckle, nod and wink,
He marks it for his own.

THE LAMENT OF A LEFT-OVER DOLL.

I'm a left-over doll, and I grieve to relate
How sad is my fortune, how lonely my fate;
For I had no notion that I should lie here,
Forlorn and neglected, at this time of year.

Oh, long before Christmas they dressed me up fine—
No dollie had clothes any better than mine;
And I rather imagine I looked very nice,
As many fair ladies inquired my price.

I was handled and dandled and fondly caressed,
My beauty admired, my value confessed.
And yet for some reason or other was I
Put back in the show case; the buyer went by.

One dear little maiden came into the store;
She saw me and for me began to implore.
She said that there wasn't a doll in the place
With a handsomer dress or a lovelier face.

She stared at me long, so of course I stared back,
And saw that her eyes were a beautiful black.
I wanted to speak, but I couldn't because
I hadn't been made with a hinge in my jaws.

I dreamed about Christmas, and how I should be
Stuck into a stocking or up on a tree—
Then carried about in my dear owner's arms
That all might admire my wonderful charms.

But Santa Claus came, and he went on his way
And took with him many a doll I dare say,
But as I've a chance to look round me I find
That dozens and dozens have been left behind.

If you were a left-over dolly yourself
You'd know how I feel, lying here on the shelf
So long after Christmas, and you wouldn't expect
Me to smile at Old Santa Claus' cruel neglect.

They've marked down my price; and I very much fear
That those who buy cheaply will hold me less dear;
And the army of curious shoppers I shun,
Since I had no part in the holiday fun.

SUGGESTIONS.

The above may be given with tableaux or as a pantomimic reading; or a little girl (or boy) may be dressed like a handsome doll, and personate it, stiffly sitting on chair, making only stiff awkward movements and speaking in machine-like way.

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

ST. NICHOLAS.

They put me in the great spare bed
  And there they bade me sleep.
I mustn't stir; I mustn't wake;
  I mustn't even peep!

Right opposite that lonely bed,
My Christmas stocking hung,
While near it, waiting for the morn,
My Sunday clothes were flung.

I counted softly, to myself,
To ten, and ten times ten.
I went through all the alphabet,
And then went through again.
I repeated that Fifth Reader piece,
A poem called "Repose,"
And tried a dozen other ways
To fall into a doze—

When suddenly the room grew light.
I heard a soft, strong bound.
'Twas Santa Claus, I felt quite sure,
But dared not look around.
'Twas nice to know that he was there
And things were going rightly,
And so I took a little nap
And tried to smile politely.

"Ho! Merry Christmas!" cried a voice;
I felt the bed a rocking.
'Twas daylight! Brother Bob was up—
And oh, that splendid stocking!

THE CHILDREN'S GIFTS.

What shall little children bring
On Christmas Day, on Christmas day?
What shall little children bring
On Christmas Day in the morning?

This shall little children bring
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day:
Love and joy from Christ their King
On Christmas Day in the morning!

(Let the little tots be divided into two "squads" to give the above in concert; first half first two lines, last half next two lines; all the next stanza, repeating it.)

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Merry Christmas, dear Papa!
Merry Christmas, kind Mamma!
Don't you hear me knocking?
Don't you know the morning's here?
Wake up papa, Mamma dear!
Oh, oh, see my stocking!!

(Little girl goes to door at rear of stage but discovers stocking and rushes toward it.)

A DISTANT CAROL.

KATHERINE VAN HARLINGEN, IN HARPER'S WEEKLY.

Mark,
Leaning from the casement dark,
How the keen, star-kindled light
Of the pulseless winter night,
Glints upon the bosom white
Of the frozen earth,
Drear, ev'n for that wond'rous birth,
Lofty, lowly,
Human, holy,

Whereat now all men rejoices,
Hark! a distant choir of voices
In a Christmas carol blending,
To the sparkling sky ascending,
Hear the far chimes' measured ringing
Faintly blended with the singing;
Sinking, soaring,
Soft, adoring;

Midnight now hath found a tongue
As though the choired stars that sung
High circling over them
That watched in Bethelem,
Were echoing, echoing still,
Peace and good-will,
Good-will.

Peace and good-will to men,
The voices wake again,
Soft chimes their tones repeat,
Oh, far-heard message sweet,
So faintly heard as yet
That men forget,
Forget.

Come nearer; louder swell!
Soar, voices! Peal, clear bell!
Wake echoes that shall last
Till all the year be past!
When yuletide comes again,
Still may Good-will to men
Be echoing, echoing still—
Peace and good-will,
Good-will.

SUGGESTIONS.

Let the last four words of each stanza be given by large class *with full volume* and echoed by sweet voices in adjoining room. All join in last stanza and echo as before.

A CHRISTMAS EVE ADVENTURE.

M. M.

Once on a time, in a queer little town,
On the shore of the Zuyder Zee,
When all the good people were fast asleep,
A strange thing happened to me!

Alone the night before Christmas,
I sat by the glowing fire,
Watching the flame as it rose and fell,
While the sparks shot high and higher.

Suddenly one of those sparks began
To flicker, glimmer and wink—
Like a bright big eye, till I hardly knew
What to do or to say or to think.

Quick as a flash it changed to a face,
And what in the world did I see
But dear old Santa Claus nodding his head
And waving his hand to me!

"Oh, follow me! follow me!" soft he cried—
And up through the chimney with him
I mounted, not daring to utter a word
Till we stood on the chimney's rim.

"Now tell me, I beg you, dear Santa Claus,
Where am I going with you?"
He laughingly answered, "Why dont you know?
To travel the wide world through!

"From my crystal palace, far in the North,
I have come since dark,—and see
These curious things for the little folks
Who live on the Zuyder Zee."

Then seating himself in his reindeer sledge,
And drawing me down by his side
He whistled, and off on the wings of the wind
We flew for our midnight ride.

But first, such comical presents he left
For the little Dutch girls and boys,—
Onions and sausages, wooden faced dolls,
Cheeses and gingerbread toys!

Away we hurried far to the South,
To the beautiful land of France;
And there we showered the loveliest gifts—
Flaxen haired dolls that could dance.

Soldiers that marched at the word of command
Necklaces, bracelets and rings.
Tiny gold watches, all studded with gems,
And hundreds of exquisite things.

Crossing the Channel we made a short call
In Scotland and Ireland, too;
Left a warm greeting for England and Wales,
Then over the ocean we flew—

Straight to America, where by myself,
Perched on a chimney high,
I watched him scramble and bustle about
Between the earth and sky.

Many a stocking he filled to the brim,
And numberless Christmas trees
Burst into bloom at his magical touch!
Then all of a sudden a breeze

Caught us and bore us away to the South,
And afterward blew us "out West;"
And never till dawn peeped over the hills
Did we stop for a moment's rest.

"Christmas is coming!" he whispered to me,
"You can see his smile in the sky.
I wish Merry Christmas to all the world!
My work is over,—good-bye!"

Like a flash he was gone, and I was alone,—
For all this happened to me
Once on a time, in a queer little town
On the shore of the Zuyder Zee!

A CHRISTMAS PARTY.

By Will Carleton.

Trim up the parlors, Good-wife, and make them extra gay;
I'm going to have a party, on this cold Christmas day;
The friends that are invited will be here—do not doubt!
I'll go myself and bring them, if they do not come without.

Yes, you have been a-guessing, perhaps a month or two,
About *my* Christmas party, and what I mean to do;
The first whose invitations have been left all to me;
You're not quite sure concerning the guests you're going to see.

Our children? No, not this time; they've children of their own,
Whose Christmas trees are bending with presents newly grown;
They've got their life-vines planted, with love-flowers all about—
Just what *we* worked so hard for, when first we started out.

Our cousins?—Well, not this time; 'tisn't what the plan intends;
They're all quite earthly-prosperous, with any amount of friends;
The world is always offering success an upward hitch;
But Christmas wasn't invented entirely for the rich.

Our preacher and his family?—They're working now, like sin,
A-sorting out the slippers and other gifts sent in;
One turkey that I knew of is on their kitchen-blaze;
A cheery, popular preacher has good times, now-a-days!
You don't know who you've cooked for?—Well, that *is* most too bad;
Of course you've no cur'os'ty—no woman ever had.

But still, your hands and heart, wife, have well nigh gone to war;
A woman works much happier, when she knows who it's for.

I'll tell you one:—a cripple that you and I both know,
Is living in a small hut, half buried in the snow—
His body bravely struggling to coax his soul to stay;
I'm going to get that cripple, and keep him here all day.

And one's a poor old woman we've never called our friend,
But whose sad life grows heavy while struggling to its end—
Without a merry Christmas for twenty winters drear;
To-day she'll have a pic-nic to last her all the year.

And one's an old-style preacher; brim-full of heavenly truth,
Whose eloquence lost fashion, or ran off with his youth;
And younger men and prettier, with flowery words came nigh;
And so the various churches have stood the old man by;

He tried his best to please them and serve Jehovah too—
He toiled each separate Sunday to "get up something new;"
They wanted elocution, and curvey-gestered speech;
And now this grand old preacher can't get a place to preach.

But I've a strong opinion, that angels crowd up near
That man-deserted leader, his God-like thoughts to hear:—
We'll have a Bible-chapter made over good as new,
When he to-day talks Gospel, and asks the blessing too!

"And who else?"—I have sent word to all in my mind's way,
Who can't afford a dinner that's equal to The Day;
And some good prosperous friends, too, will come with smiling face,
To keep those poor from feeling that they're a separate race.

And one of them's a neighbor; who, though sincere, no doubt,
Once couldn't quite understand me—and so we two fell out;
And every Sunday morning we've passed each other's door,
And have not known each other for fifteen years or more.

I went to him last evening, and said, "Old friend, see here;
We're both tip-top good fellows; now doesn't it strike you queer,
That we're assisting Satan to sow the grain of strife?
Come over, sure, to-morrow, and bring along your wife.

"Just come and help us, helping some poor ones draw their load,
Who've stalled upon the side-hills of Life's uneven roads."
He looked at me in wonder—then stood a moment still—
Then grasped my hands, and whispered, "My dear old friend, I will."

I think you're with me, Good-wife, from what your features say;
And that's the kind of comp'ny we're going to have to-day—
Through which I hope a true love for all mankind may roam;
A sort of Christmas party where Christ would feel at at home.

—*Ladies Home Journal.*

THE TWO LITTLE STOCKINGS.

SARAH KEABLES HUNT.

Two little stockings hung side by side
Close to the fireplace broad and wide.
"Two?" said Saint Nick, as down he came,
Loaded with toys and many a game.
"Ho! ho!" said he, with a laugh of fun,
"I'll have no cheating, my pretty one;
I know who dwells in this house, my dear;
There's only one little girl lives here."

So he crept up close to the chimney-place
And measured a sock, with a sober face.
Just then a wee little note fell out
And fluttered low, like a bird about.
"Aha! what's this?" said he in surprise,
As he pushed his specs up close to his eyes
And read the address, in a child's rough plan,
"Dear Saint Nicholas," so it began,
"The other stocking you see on the wall
I have hung for a child named Clara Hall.
She's a poor little girl, but very good;
So I thought, perhaps, you kindly would
Fill up her stocking, too, to-night,
And help to make her Christmas bright.
If you've not enough for both stockings there,
Please put all in Clara's; I shall not care."
Saint Nicholas brushed a tear from his eye,
"God bless you, darling," he said with a sigh.
Then softly he blew through the chimney high
A note like a bird's when it soars on high.
When down came two of the funniest mortals
That ever were seen this side earth's portals.
"Hurry up!" said Saint Nick, "and nicely prepare
All a little girl wants where money is rare."
Then, oh, what a scene there was in that room!
Away went the elves, but down from the gloom
Of the sooty old chimney comes tumbling low

A child's whole wardrobe from head to toe.
How Santa Claus laughed as he gathered them in
And fastened each one to the sock with a pin!
Right to the toe he hung a blue dress.
"She'll think it came from the sky, I guess,"
Said Saint Nicholas, smoothing the folds of blue
And tying the hood to the stocking, too.
When all the warm clothes were fastened on,
And both little socks were filled and done,
Then Santa Claus tucked a toy here and there
And hurried away to the frosty air,
Saying, "God pity the poor and bless the dear child
Who pities them too on this night so wild!"
The wind caught the words and bore them on high
Till they died away in the midnight sky,
While Saint Nicholas flew through the icy air,
Bringing "Peace and Good Will" with him everywhere.

SUGGESTIONS.

The above may be used with tableaux to illustrate it.

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR.

LAURA ROSAMOND WHITE, IN FRANK LESLIE'S.

Christmas comes but once a year!
Ring the bells of every steeple
So the people, all the people,
In the Christian world shall hear.

Emerald trees of precious splendor
With their wondrous fruit surrender,
And the gift-king will appear,
Wherefore should I tell the story
Of heavenly child of glory—
Tale of sorrow and good cheer!
You have heard it often spoken,
And by many a treasure-token
Have memorialized the tear
And the gladness that commingled
When the holy One was singled
For the manger, cross and bier.

Christmas comes but once a year!
With its legend of the stocking,
And the presence that—unknocking—
Enters, ere bold chanticleer
Calls in shrill and sturdy warning:
"It is mor-r-n-ing? It is mor-r-n-ing!"
In his matin, loud and clear;
And the shadow-gate unlocking,
Is so beautiful, so mocking,
Arched by hope and barred by fear.
Lovely spirits in robes of whiteness
Leave their dreams with feet of lightness,
As the day-dawn draweth near,
And their cheeks are like June roses

When their eager search discloses
Christmas presents sweet and queer.

Christmas comes but once a year!
But to some it does not come
Ever with remembrance dear.
Some are poor and lone and weary,
Sorely stricken and heart-dreary.
Only He—pierced by the spear
Till His side became a fountain,
On the brow of Calvary's mountain—
Fathoms discipline severe.
He can read the checkered blending
Of the wrong and right unending—
Seeming so to eyesight blear—
'Tis the sphinx of man's career.
But ring bells from every steeple;
Tell the happy, favored people
Christmas gilds the dying year.

SUGGESTIONS.

Bell accompaniment in appropriate lines of first and last stanza, with triangle. *Bells must be in harmony*

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

REV. A. J RYAN.

(*Adapted.*)

I'm sitting alone in my silent room
  This long December night,
Watching the fire-flame fill the gloom
  With many a picture bright.
But list! there soundeth a bell,
With a mysterious ding, dong dell!
Trembling along the gale,
  Under the stars and over the snow.
  Why is it? whence is it sounding so?

Is it the toll of a bridal bell?
Or is it a spirit's wail?
Solemnly, mornfully,
Sad, and how lornfully!
        Ding, dong, dell!
Whence is it? who can tell?
And the marvelous notes they sink and swell,
Sadder, and saddder, and sadder still,
How the sounds tremble, how they thrill!

    Every tone
    So like a moan,
As if the strange bells stranger clang,
Throbbed with a terrible human pang,

Ding, dong, dell!
Dismally—drearily—
Ever so wearily.
Far off and faint as a requiem plaint,
Floats the deep-toned voice of the mystic bell.
Piercingly—thrillingly—
Icily—chillily—
Near—and more near—
Drear—and more drear—
Soundeth the wild, weird, ding, dong, dell,
Now sinking lower,
It tolleth slower.
I list and I hear it sound no more.
It is a bell—yet not a bell
Whose sound may reach the ear!
It tolls a knell, yet not a knell
Which earthly sense may hear.

In every soul a bell of dole
Hangs ready to be tolled;
And from that bell a funeral knell
Is often, often rolled;
And Memory is the sexton gray
Who tolls the dreary knell;
And nights like this he loves to sway
And swing his mystic bell.

'Twas that I heard, and nothing more,
  This lonely Christmas Eve;
Then for the dead I'll meet no more
  At Christmas let me grieve.
Night, be a Priest! put your dark stole on,
  And murmur a holy prayer
Over each grave, and for every one
  Lying down helpless there.

* * * *

Very low, in tender tones,
The music pleads, the music moans;
I forgive and have forgiven
The dead who died unshriven!
    De Profundis! De Profundis!

And the Pontiff night, with his dark stole on,
  Whispereth soft and low:
    "Requiescat! Requiescat!
    Peace, Peace! to every one
For whom we grieve this Christmas eve,
  In their graves beneath the snow."

The stars in far-off Heaven
Have long since struck eleven;
And hark from temple! and tower
Soundeth time's grandest midnight hour,
  Blessed by the Savior's birth.

And night putteth off his sable stole,
Symbol of sound and sign of dole,
For one with many a starry gem
To honor this babe of Bethlehem.
Sound the thrilling song,
Let the Heavens ring.
Roll the hymn along;
Welcome, new-born King!
Gloria in excelsis!
In excelsis Deo!

Let us all rejoice,
Swell the hymn on high,
Lift each heart and voice,
Sound it to the sky.
Gloria in excelsis!
In excelsis Deo!

Sing it, sinful earth
Over sea and land!
For the Savior's birth
Chant the anthem grand.
Gloria in excelsis!
In excelsis Deo!

So the day is waking,
In the East so far

Dawn is fairly breaking,
  Sunk is every star.
Merry, merry Christmas
  Scatter smiles and mirth.
Merry, merry Christmas
  Hasten 'round the earth.

SUGGESTIONS.

Give the above as a Concert Exercise, dividing the class as suggested for "Christmas Bells," page 10, and beginning with "Gloria in Excelsis." Let the rest be given as an anthem or a chant.

N. B. Let the *sound* of the words suggest their meaning throughout the recitation.

AN OLD ROUNDSMAN'S STORY.

MARGARET EYTINGE.

So you're a writer, and you think I could
  Tell you some story of the Christmas time—
Something that happened to myself, which you,
  Having the rhyming knack, might put in rhyme?

Well, you are right. But of the yarns I mind
  The most are best untold, they are so sad.
My beat's the shadiest in the town, you know,
  Among the very poor and very bad.

And yet, from one of its worst places, where
Thieves gather who go 'round with murderous knives,
A blessing came one Christmas day that brought
My wife and me the sunshine of our lives.

The night before I had at last run down
Lame Jim, the captain of a river gang,
Who never had been caught, although his deeds
Were such that he deserved for them to hang.

And as he sprang upon the dock I sprang
Like lightning after him, and in a trice
Fell through a trap door and went sliding
Down upon a plank as slippery as ice.

I drew my pistol as I slid, and when
I struck the earth again, "Hands up!" I cried,
"I've got you now," and at the same time flashed
The light of a dark lantern everyside.

I'd landed in a big, square room, but no
Lame Jim or any other rough was there—
But from blankets spread upon the floor
A child looked up at me with wondering stare—

A little girl whose eyes shone like the stars,
With sweet pale face and curly head.
"Why did you come tho fatht? You woke me up,
"And thcared me, too," in lisping words she said.

"But now I am not thcared, for I know you.
"You're Thanta Clauth. My thocking'th on the wall.
"I with you Merry Chrithmuth. Whereth my toyeth?
"I hope you brought a lovely cup and doll."

I never was so taken back, I vow:
And while I speechless stood, Jim got away.
"Who are you, pretty one?" at last I asked.
"I? Don't you know? Why, I am little May.

"My mamma died the other night and went
To heaven, and papa brought me here.
It ithn't a nithe plathe—I'm afraid of it—
It'th all tho lonethome 'n' tho queer.

"But I remembered it wath Crithmath eve,
And hoped you'd find me; though I thought becauthe
There wath no chimney you might not. But, oh,
I'm glad you did, Dear Mithter Thanta Clauthe!"

Well, Captain Jim escaped—the law, I mean,
But not a higher power. He was drowned—
And on his body, near his heart, poor wretch,
The picture of his baby girl was found.

And that dear baby girl went home with me,
And never was a gift more precious given—
For childless had our home been many years,
And so she seemed sent to it, straight from Heaven.

God's ways are wonderful. From rankest soil
There often grows a flower sweet and bright.
But I must go. My time is nearly up.
A Merry Christmas to you and "Good Night."

SUGGESTIONS.

Let the reciter personate a policeman, including his "billy." He talks to a newspaper man who makes notes with pencil on tablet, occasionally looking up as if to ask a question. Policeman walks up and down stage; frequently stopping to talk to man or audience—which he faces as much as possible. Stage may be arranged as in pantomime "Christmas Eve in the Street," p. 32.

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